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MASTERMAN READY

BY
CAPTAIN MARRYAT

WITH FIVE COLOUR PLATES BY
S. BRIAULT



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6/-

MASTERMAN READY

CHAPTER I

Ship before the Wind—Stormy Petrels—Robinson Crusoe—Description of the Ship and her crew.

IT was in the month of October 18—that the *Pacific*, a large ship, was running before a heavy gale of wind in the middle of the vast Atlantic Ocean. She had but little sail, for the wind was so strong that the canvas would have been split into pieces by the furious blast before which she was driven through the waves, which were very high, and following her almost as fast as she darted through their boiling waters ; sometimes heaving up her stern and sinking her bows down so deep into the hollow sea, that it appeared as if she would have dived down underneath the waves ; but she was a fine vessel, and the captain was a good seaman, who did what he considered best for the safety of his vessel, and then put his trust in that Providence who is ever watchful over us.

The captain stood before the wheel watching the men who were steering the ship ; and as he looked around him and up at the heavens, he sung in a low voice the words of a sea song :

“ One wide water all around us,
All above us one black sky.”

And so it was with them ;—they were in the middle of the Atlantic, not another vessel to be seen, and the heavens were covered with black clouds, which were borne along furiously by the gale ; the sea ran mountains high, and broke into large white foaming crests, while the fierce wind howled through the rigging of the vessel.

Besides the captain of the ship and the two men at the wheel, there were two other personages on deck : one was a young lad about twelve years old, and the other a weather-beaten old seaman, whose grizzly locks were streaming in the wind, as he paced aft and looked over the taffrail of the vessel.

The young lad observing a heavy sea coming up to the stern

of the vessel, caught hold of the old man's arm, crying out, "Won't that great wave come into us, Ready?"

"No, Master William, it will not: don't you see how the ship lifts her quarters to it?—and now it has passed underneath us. But it might happen, and then what would become of you, if I did not hold on, and hold you on also? You would be washed overboard."

"I don't like the sea much, Ready; I wish I were safe on shore again," replied the lad. "Don't the waves look as if they wished to beat the ship all to pieces?"

"Yes, they do; and they roar as if angry because they cannot bury the vessel beneath them: but I am used to them, Master Willy, and with a good ship like this, and a good captain and crew, I don't care for them."

"But sometimes ships do sink, and then everybody is drowned."

"Yes, Master William; and very often the very ships sink which those on board think are most safe. We can only do our best, and after that we must submit to the will of Heaven."

"Were you ever shipwrecked on a desolate island, like Robinson Crusoe?"

"Yes, Master William, I have been shipwrecked; but I never heard of Robinson Crusoe. So many have been wrecked and undergone great hardships, and so many more have never lived to tell what they have suffered, that it's not very likely that I should have known that one man you speak of, out of so many."

"Oh, but it's all in a book which I have read. I could tell you all about it—and so I will when the ship is quiet again; but now I wish you would help me down below, for I promised mamma not to stay up long."

"Then always keep your promises like a good lad," replied the old man; "now give me your hand, and I'll answer for it that we will fetch the hatchway without a tumble; and when the weather is fine again, I'll tell you how I was wrecked, and you shall tell me all about Robinson Crusoe."

Having seen Master William safe to the cabin door, the old seaman returned to the deck, for it was his watch.

Masterman Ready, for such was his name, had been more than fifty years at sea, having been bound apprentice to a collier which sailed from South Shields, when he was only ten years old. His face was browned from long exposure, and there were deep furrows on his cheeks, but he was still a hale and active man.

In cases of difficulty and danger, the captain would not hesitate

to ask his opinion, and frequently take his advice. He was on board as second mate of the vessel.

The *Pacific* was, as we have before observed, a very fine ship, and well able to contend with the most violent storm. She was of more than four hundred tons burthen, and was then making a passage out to New South Wales, with a valuable cargo of English hardware, cutlery, and other manufactures. The captain was a good navigator and seaman, and moreover a good man, of a cheerful, happy disposition, always making the best of everything, and when accidents did happen, always more inclined to laugh than to look grave. His name was Osborn. The first mate, whose name was Mackintosh, was a Scotsman, rough and ill-tempered, but paying strict attention to his duty—a man that Captain Osborn could trust, but whom he did not like.

Ready we have already spoken of, and it will not be necessary to say anything about the seamen on board, except that there were thirteen of them, hardly a sufficient number to man so large a vessel ; but just as they were about to sail, five of the seamen, who did not like the treatment they had received from Mackintosh, the first mate, had left the ship, and Captain Osborn did not choose to wait until he could obtain others in their stead. This proved unfortunate, as the events which we shall hereafter relate will show.

CHAPTER II

Some Account of William and his Parents—A Calm—Accidents during the Gale—One lives and learns—Poor Juno.

MASTER WILLIAM, whom we have introduced to the reader, was the eldest boy of a family who were passengers on board, consisting of the father, mother, and four children : his father was a Mr. Seagrave, a very well informed, clever man, who having for many years held an office under Government at Sydney, New South Wales, was now returning from a leave of absence of three years. He had purchased from the Government several thousand acres of land ; it had since risen very much in value, and he was now taking out with him a variety of articles for its improvement, and for his own use ; such as furniture for his house, implements of agriculture, seeds, plants, cattle, and many other things too numerous to mention.

Mrs. Seagrave was an amiable woman, but not in very strong health. The family consisted of William, who was the eldest, a

clever, steady boy, but, at the same time, full of mirth and humour ; Thomas, who was six years old, a very thoughtless but good-tempered boy, full of mischief, and always in a scrape ; Caroline, a little girl of seven years ; and Albert, a fine strong little fellow, who was not one year old : he was under the charge of a black girl who had come from the Cape of Good Hope to Sydney, and had followed Mrs. Seagrave to England. And now we will proceed :—

It was not until the fourth day from its commencement that the gale abated, and then it gradually subsided until it was nearly a calm. The wind blew mild and soft, the sea had gone down, and the ship was running through the water at the speed of about four miles an hour. Mrs. Seagrave, wrapped up in a cloak, was seated upon one of the arm-chests near the stern of the ship, her husband and children were all with her enjoying the fine weather, when Captain Osborn, who had been taking an observation of the sun with his sextant, came up to them.

"Well, Master Tommy, you are very glad that the gale is over?"

"I didn't care," replied Tommy, "only I spilt all my soup. But Juno tumbled off her chair, and rolled away with the baby till papa picked them both up."

"It was a mercy that poor Albert was not killed," observed Mrs. Seagrave.

"And so he might have been, if Juno had not thought only of him and nothing at all about herself," replied Mr. Seagrave.

"That's very true, sir," replied Captain Osborn. "She saved the child, and, I fear, hurt herself."

"I thump my head very hard," said Juno, smiling.

"Yes, and it's lucky that you have a thick woolly coat over it," replied Captain Osborn, laughing. "Never mind, Juno, you are a good girl."

"It is twelve o'clock by the sun, sir," said Mackintosh, the first mate, to the captain.

"Then bring me up the latitude, Mr. Mackintosh, while I work out the longitude from the sights which I took this morning. In five minutes, Mr. Seagrave, I shall be ready to prick off over our place on the chart."

"I should like to go down now, my dear," said Mrs. Seagrave ; "perhaps Ready will see the baby down safe."

"That I will, ma'am," said Ready, putting his quadrant on the capstern: "now, Juno, give me the child, and go down first :—stern foremost, you stupid girl ! how often do I tell you that ? Some day or another you will come down with a run."

"And break my head," said Juno.

"Yes, or break your arm ; and then who is to hold the child ? "

As soon as they were all down in the cabin, the captain and Mr. Seagrave marked the position of the vessel on the chart, and found that they were one hundred and thirty miles from the Cape of Good Hope.

"If the wind holds, we shall be in to-morrow," said Mr. Seagrave to his wife. "Juno, perhaps you may see your father and mother."

Poor Juno shook her head, and a tear or two stole down her dark cheek. With a mournful face she told them that her father and mother belonged to a Dutch boor, who had gone with them many miles into the interior : she had been parted from them when quite a little child, and had been left at Cape Town.

"But you are free now, Juno," said Mrs. Seagrave ; "you have been to England, and whoever puts his foot on shore in England, becomes free from that moment."

"Yes, Missy, I free ; but still I have no fader or moder," replied Juno, weeping. But little Albert patted her cheek, and she was soon smiling again, and playing with the little boy.

CHAPTER III

Ship in Table Bay—Table Mountain—Going on shore—Botanic Gardens—Animal Arrangement—Den of Lions—Tommy in Danger, and very much frightened—Return on Board.

THE next morning the *Pacific* arrived at the Cape, and anchored in Table Bay.

"Why do they call this Table Bay, Ready ?" said William.

"I suppose it's because they call that great mountain the Table Mountain, Master William ; you see how flat the mountain is on the top."

"Yes, it is quite as flat as a table."

"Yes, and sometimes you will see the white clouds rolling down over the top of it in a very curious manner ; and that the sailors call spreading the tablecloth ; it is a sign of bad weather."

"We shall remain here for two days, sir," said Captain Osborn to Mr. Seagrave ; "if you and Mrs. Seagrave would like to go on shore."

"I will go down and ask Mrs. Seagrave," said her husband, who went down the ladder, followed by William.

Upon the question being put to Mrs. Seagrave, she replied that she was quite satisfied with the ship having no motion, and did not feel herself equal to going on shore ; it was therefore decided that she should remain on board with the two younger children, and that, on the following day, Mr. Seagrave should take William and Tommy to see Cape Town, and return on board before night.

The next morning, Captain Osborn lowered down one of the large boats, and Mr. Seagrave, accompanied by Captain Osborn, went on shore with William and Tommy. Tommy had promised his mamma to be very good ; but that he always did, and almost always forgot his promise directly he was out of sight. As soon as they landed, they went up to a gentleman's house, with whom Captain Osborn was acquainted. They stayed for a few minutes to drink a glass of lemonade, for it was very warm; and then it was proposed that they should go to the Company's Gardens, and see the wild beasts which were confined there, at which William was much delighted, and Tommy clapped his hands with joy.

"What shall we see ?" said Tommy.

"You will see lions, Tommy, a great many in a large den together," said Captain Osborn.

"Oh ! I want to see a lion."

"You must not go too near them, recollect."

"No. I won't," said Tommy.

As soon as they entered the gates, Tommy escaped from Captain Osborn, and ran away in his hurry to see the lions ; but Captain Osborn caught him again, and held him fast by the hand.

"Here is a pair of very strange birds," said the gentleman who accompanied them ; "they are called Secretaries, on account of the feathers which hang behind their heads, as the feather of a pen does when a clerk puts it behind his ear : but they are very useful, for they are snake-killers ; indeed, they would, if they could, live altogether upon snakes, which they are very great enemies to, never letting one escape. They strike them with their feet, and with such force as to kill them immediately."

"Are there many snakes in this country ?" inquired William.

"Yes, and very venomous snakes," replied Mr. Seagrave ; "so that these birds are very useful in destroying them. You observe, William, that the Almighty, in His wisdom, has so arranged it that no animal (especially of a noxious kind) shall be multiplied to excess, but kept under by being preyed upon by some other ; indeed wherever in any country an animal exists in any quantity there is generally found another animal which

destroys it. The Secretary inhabits this country, where snakes exist in numbers, that it may destroy them : in England the bird would be of little value."

They continued their walk until they came to the den of the lions. It was a large place enclosed with a strong and high wall of stone, with only one window to it for the visitors to look at them, as it was open above. This window was wide, and with strong iron bars running from the top to the bottom; but the width between the bars was such that a lion could put his paw out with ease ; and they were therefore cautioned not to go too near. It was a fine sight to see eight or ten of these noble-looking animals lying down in various attitudes, quite indifferent apparently to the people outside—basking in the sun, and slowly moving their tufted tails to and fro. William examined them at a respectful distance from the bars ; and so did Tommy, who had his mouth open with astonishment, in which there was at first not a little fear mixed ; but he soon got bolder. The gentleman who had accompanied them, and who had been long at the Cape, was relating to Mr. Seagrave and Captain Osborn some very curious anecdotes about the lion. William and they were so interested that they did not perceive that Tommy had slipped back to the grated window of their den. Tommy looked at the lions, and then he wanted to make them move about : there was one fine full-grown young lion about three years old, who was lying down nearest to the window, and Tommy took up a stone and threw it at him : the lion appeared not to notice it, for he did not move, although he fixed his eyes upon Tommy ; so Tommy became more brave, and threw another, and then another, approaching each time nearer to the bars of the window.

All of a sudden the lion gave a tremendous roar, and sprang at Tommy, bounding against the iron bars of the cage with such force that, had they not been very strong, it must have broken them. As it was, they shook and rattled so that pieces of mortar fell from the stones. Tommy shrieked ; and, fortunately for himself, fell back and tumbled head over heels, or the lion's paws would have reached him. Captain Osborn and Mr. Seagrave ran up to Tommy, and picked him up : he roared with fright as soon as he could fetch his breath, while the lion stood at the bars, lashing his tail, snarling, and showing his enormous fangs.

"Take me away—take me on board the ship," cried Tommy, who was terribly frightened.

"What did you do, Tommy ?" said Captain Osborn.

"I won't throw any more stones, Mr. Lion ; I won't indeed," cried Tommy, looking terrified towards the animal.

Mr. Seagrave scolded Tommy well for his foolish conduct, and by degrees he became more composed.

When they had seen everything, they went back to the gentleman's house to dinner; and, after dinner, they returned on board, when Tommy's adventure with the lion was told to his mother, who declared that she never should be able to trust him out of her sight.

CHAPTER IV

Albatross—Wonderful Provision of Nature—Symptoms of a storm—Preparations for a Storm—Dreadful Storm—Struck by Lightning—Terrible Wreck and Loss of Life.

THE following morning the fresh water and provisions were received on board, and once more the *Pacific* stretched her broad canvas to the winds, and there was every prospect of a rapid voyage, as for many days she continued her passage with a fair wind and flowing sheet. But this did not continue ; it fell calm, and remained so for nearly three days, during which not a breath of wind was to be felt on the wide expanse of water ; all nature appeared as if in repose, except that now and then an albatross would drop down at some distance from the stern of the vessel.

"What great bird is that, Ready ?" inquired William.

"It is an albatross, Master William, the largest sea-bird we have. Their wings are very long. I have seen them shot, and they have measured eleven feet from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other when the wings have been spread out."

"It is the first one that I have seen," said William.

"Because you seldom meet them north of the Cape, sir."

On the third day of the calm, the barometer fell so low as to induce Captain Osborn to believe that they should have a severe gale, and every preparation was made to meet it, should it come on. Nor was he mistaken : towards midnight the clouds gathered up fast, and as they heaped one over the other, the lightning darted through them in every direction ; and as the clouds rose up, so did the wind, but at first only in heavy gusts, and then lulling again to a calm.

"Ready," said Captain Osborn, "how do you think we shall have the wind ?"

"Why, Captain Osborn, to tell you the truth, I don't think it

will be steady to one point long. It may at first blow hard from the north, but it's my idea it will shift soon to some other quarter, and blow still harder."

" What think you, Mackintosh ? "

" We'll have plenty of it, and a long steady gale, that's my notion ; and the sooner we ship the dead light, the better."

Mr. Seagrave, with William, happened to be standing by at the time of this conversation, and at the term *dead* lights Willy's face expressed some anxiety. Ready perceived it, and said—

" That's a foolish name they give to the shutters which go over the cabin-windows to prevent the water from breaking into the cabin when a vessel sails before the wind ; you know we had them on the last time that we had a gale, so don't you go down to frighten your mother by telling her that the dead lights are shipped."

" I was not afraid, Ready, but I was thinking of my mother, I acknowledge she has been so very weak these last two days."

" But, Ready," said Captain Osborn, " why do you think we shall have a shift of wind ? "

" Well, I don't know ; perhaps I was wrong," replied the old man, " and Mr. Mackintosh is right : the wind does seem to come steady from the north-east, that's certain ; " and Ready walked away to the binnacle, and looked at the compass. Mr. Seagrave and William then went below, and Mr. Mackintosh went forward to give his orders. As soon as they were all gone, Ready went up again to Captain Osborn, and said—

" Captain Osborn, it's not for me to contradict Mr. Mackintosh, but that's of little consequence in a time like this : I should have held to my opinion, had it not been that the gentleman passenger and his son were standing by ; but now, as the coast is clear, I tell you that we shall have something worse than a gale of wind. I have been in these latitudes before, and I am an old seaman, as you know. There's something in the air, and there has been something during the last three days of calm, which reminds me too well of what I have seen here before ; and I am sure that we shall have little better than a hurricane, as far as wind goes—and worse in one point, that it will last much longer than hurricanes generally do. I have been watching, and even the birds tell me so, and they are told by their nature, which is never mistaken. That calm has been nothing more than a repose of the winds previous to their being roused up to do their worst ; and that is my real opinion."

" Well, and I'm inclined to agree with you, Ready."

They had no time to lose : their preparations were hardly

complete before the wind had settled to a fierce gale from the north-east. The sea rose rapidly ; topsail after topsail was furled ; and by dusk the *Pacific* was flying through the water with the wind on her quarter, under reefed foresail and stormed staysail. It was with difficulty that three men at the wheel could keep the helm, such were the blows which the vessel received from the heavy seas on the quarter. Not one seaman in the ship took advantage of his watch below to go to sleep that night, careless as they generally are ; the storm was too dreadful. About three o'clock in the morning the wind suddenly subsided ; it was but for a minute or two, and then it again burst on the vessel from another quarter of the compass, as Ready had foretold. The shift of wind which had been to the west-north-west, compelled them to alter the course of the vessel, for they had no chance but to scud, as they now did, under bare poles ; but in consequence of the sea having taken its run from the former wind, which had been north-east, it was, as sailors call it, *cross*, and every minute the waves poured over the ship, sweeping all before their weight of waters. One poor man was washed overboard, and any attempt made to save him would have been unavailing. Captain Osborn was standing by the weather gunnel, holding on by one of the belaying pins, when he said to Mackintosh—who was near him—

“ How long will this last, think you ? ”

“ Longer than the ship will,” replied the mate gravely.

“ I should hope not,” replied the captain ; “ still, it cannot look worse. What do you think, Ready ? ”

“ Far more fear from above than from below just now,” replied Ready, pointing to the yard-arms of the ship, to each of which were little balls of electric matter attached, flaring out to a point. “ Look at those two clouds, sir, rushing at each other ; if I—”

Ready had not time to finish what he would have said, before a blaze of light so dazzling that it left them all in utter darkness for some seconds afterwards, burst upon their vision, accompanied with a peal of thunder at which the whole vessel trembled fore and aft. A crash—a rushing forward—and a shriek were heard, and when they had recovered their eyesight, the foremast had been rent by the lightning as if it had been a lath, and the ship was in flames : the men at the wheel, blinded by lightning as well as appalled, could not steer ; the ship broached to—away went the mainmast over the side—and all was wreck, confusion, and dismay.

Fortunately the heavy seas which poured over the forecastle soon extinguished the flames, or they all must have perished ; but the ship lay now helpless, and at the mercy of the waves, beating violently against the wrecks of the masts which floated to leeward, but were still held fast to the vessel by their rigging. As soon as they could recover from the shock, Ready and the first mate hastened to the wheel to try to get the ship before the wind ; but this they could not do, as, the foremast and mainmast being gone, the mizenmast prevented her paying off and answering to the helm. Ready, having persuaded two of the men to take the helm, made a sign to Mackintosh (for now the wind was so loud that they could not hear each other speak), and, going aft, they obtained axes, and cut away the mizen-rigging ; the mizen-topmast and head of the mizenmast went over the side, and then the stump of the foremast was sufficient to get the ship before the wind again. Still there was much delay and much confusion before they could clear away the wreck of the masts ; and, as soon as they could make inquiry, they found that four of the men had been killed by the lightning and the fall of the foremast, and there were now but eight remaining, besides Captain Osborn and his two mates.

CHAPTER V

Sailors never discouraged—Anxiety of the Captain—Storm renewed—Pride of Man humbled—Seamen never at a loss—Uncertainty of Life.

SAILORS are never discouraged by danger as long as they have any chance of relieving themselves by their own exertions. The loss of their shipmates, so instantaneously summoned away,—the wrecked state of the vessel,—the wild surges burying them beneath their angry waters,—the howling of the wind,—the dazzling of the lightning, and the pealing of the thunder, did not prevent them from doing what their necessity demanded. Mackintosh, the first mate, rallied the men, and contrived himself to fix a block and strap to the still smoking stump of the foremast ; a rope was rove through the block, and the main-top-gallant sail hoisted, so that the vessel might run faster before the gale, and answer her helm better than she did.

The ship was again before the wind, and comparatively safe, notwithstanding the heavy blows she now received from the pursuing waves. Night again came on, but there was no repose, and the men were worn out with exposure and fatigue. Captain

Osborn and Ready had often gone down to afford some assistance and comfort to the passengers in the cabin. Mrs. Seagrave, worn out with fear and anxiety, had become seriously unwell, and her husband watched her ; the children were persuaded to remain in their beds, and the infant never left the arms of the patient and unwearyed Juno.

The third day of the gale dawned, but the appearances were as alarming as ever : the continual breaking of the seas over the stern had washed away the binnacles, and it was impossible now to be certain of the course the ship had been steered, or the distance which had been run ; the leaky state of the vessel proved how much she had already suffered from the violent shocks which she had received, and the certainty was apparent, that if the weather did not abate, she could not possibly withstand the force of the waves much longer.

The countenance of Captain Osborn showed great anxiety : he had a heavy responsibility on his shoulders—he might lose a valuable ship, and still more valuable cargo, even if they did not all lose their lives ; for they were now approaching where the sea was studded with low coral islands, upon which they might be thrown by the waves and wind, without having the slightest power to prevent it in their present disabled condition.

Ready was standing by him when Captain Osborn said—

“ I don’t much like this, Ready; we are running on danger, and have no help for it.”

“ That’s true enough,” replied Ready : “ we have no help for it ; it is God’s will, sir, and His will be done.”

“ Amen,” replied Captain Osborn solemnly ; and then he continued, after a pause, “ There were many captains who envied me when I obtained command of this fine ship,—would they change with me now ? ”

“ I should rather think not, Captain Osborn ; but you never know what the day may bring forth. You sailed with this vessel, full of hope—you now, not without reason, feel something approaching despair ; but who knows ? it may please the Almighty to rebuke those angry winds and waves, and to-morrow we may again hope for the best ; at all events you have done your duty—no man can do more. I do wish that Mr. Mackintosh would not swear so ; I always think that the winds blow harder, as if angry that their Divine Master should be defied by such poor worms as we are.”

“ You are right ;” replied Captain Osborn ; “ but hold hard, Ready, that sea’s aboard of us.”

Ready had just time to cling with both hands to the belaying pins when the sea poured over the vessel, with a volume of water, which for some time swept them off their legs ; they clung on firmly, and at last recovered their feet.

"She started a timber or two with that blow, I rather think," said Ready, as he took off his hat to shake the water from it.

"I'm afraid so ; the best vessel ever built could not stand such shocks long," replied Captain Osborn ; "and at present, with our weak crew, I do not see that we can get more sail upon her."

All that night the ship flew in darkness before the gale. At daybreak the wind abated, and the sea went down : the ship was, however, still kept before the wind, for she had suffered too much to venture to put her broadside to the sea. Preparations were now made for getting up jury-masts ; and the worn-out seamen were busily employed, under the direction of Captain Osborn and his two mates, when Mr. Seagrave and William came up on deck.

William stared about him : he perceived, to his astonishment, that the tall masts, with all their rigging and sails, had disappeared, and the whole deck was in a state of confusion and disorder.

"See, my child," said Mr. Seagrave, "the wreck and devastation which are here. See how the pride of man is humbled before the elements of the great Jehovah."

"Ay, Master Willy," said old Ready, "look around you, as you well may. Do you remember the verses in the Bible ?—if not, I remember them well, for I have often read them, and have often felt the truth of them : 'They that go down into the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.'

"But, father," said Willy after a pause, "how shall we ever get to Sydney without masts or sails ?"

"Why, Master William," replied Ready, "we must do what we can : we sailors are never much at a loss, and I daresay before night you will find us under some sort of sail again. We have lost our great masts, so we must put up jury-masts, as we call them, that is, little ones, and little sails upon them, and, if it pleases God, we shall see Sydney yet. How is madam, sir ?" continued Ready to Mr. Seagrave ; "is she better ?"

"I fear she is very weak and ill," replied Mr. Seagrave ; "nothing but fine weather will do her any good. Do you think that it will be fine now ?"

"Why, sir, to tell you the truth, I fear we shall have more of it yet : I have not given my thoughts to the captain, as I might

be mistaken ; but still I think so—I've not been fifty years at sea without learning something. I don't like the gathering of that bank there, Mr. Seagrave, and I shouldn't wonder if it were to blow again from the very same quarter, and that before dark."

"God's will be done," replied Mr. Seagrave ; "but I am very fearful about my poor wife, who is completely worn to a shadow."

"I shouldn't think so much about that, sir, as I really never knew of people dying that way, although they suffer much. Master William, do you know that we have lost some of our men since you were down below?"

"No—I heard the steward say something outside about the foremast ; but I did not like to ask, as mamma was so frightened."

"You were a kind boy for that, Master William ; but hear me,—we have lost five of our smartest and best men ; Wilson was washed overboard—Fennings and Masters struck dead with the lightning—and Jones and Emery crushed by the fall of the foremast. Master William, did any of these men imagine, when they left the Cape, or indeed the day or the hour before it happened, that their souls were to be required of them, and their bodies should now be floating hundreds of miles from the land ? You are young, Master Willy, but you cannot think too early of your Maker, or call to mind what they say in the Burial Service,—‘In the midst of life we are in death.’"

"Thank you, Ready, thank you for the lesson you have given my son," said Mr. Seagrave ; "and, William, treasure it up in your memory."

"Yes, Master William, they are the words of an old man who has seen many and many a one who was full of youth and spirits called away before him, and who is grateful to God that He has been pleased to preserve his life, and allow him to amend his ways."

"I have been thinking," said Mr. Seagrave, after a silence of a minute or two, "that a sailor has no right to marry."

"I've always thought so, sir," replied Ready ; "and I daresay many a poor deserted sailor's wife, when she has listened to the wind and rain in her lonely bed, has thought the same."

"But I must stay here no longer, Mrs. Seagrave will want me in the cabin. William, will you stay on deck ?" said Mr. Seagrave,

"Better not, Master William, we are all too busy, and I cannot look after you now : there'll be no sleep this night for any of us, fair or foul ; we are weak-handed now. So good-night, gentlemen, both of you."

CHAPTER VI

Confusion in the Cabin—Captain struck senseless—Symptoms of Insubordination—Mackintosh's Advice—Preparations for quitting Ship—Distress of Mr. Seagrave—Resignation to Providence—Noble Conduct of Ready—Departure of the Crew.

MR. SEAGRAVE and William went down below into the cabin, where they found that there was plenty of employment. The steward had brought a basin of very hot pea-soup for the children. Tommy, who was sitting up in the bed-place with his sister, had snatched it out of Juno's left hand, for she held the baby with the other, and in so doing, had thrown it over Caroline, who was screaming; while Juno, in her hurry to assist Caroline, had slipped down on the deck with the baby, who was also crying with fright, although not hurt. Fortunately, Mr. Scaggrave came down just in time to pick up Juno and the baby, and then tried to comfort little Caroline, who after all was not much scalded, as the soup had had time to cool.

"Massa Tommy is a very naughty boy," cried Juno. Master Tommy thought it better to say nothing—he was duly admonished—the steward cleaned up the mess, and order was at length restored.

In the meantime, they were not idle upon the deck: the carpenter was busy fixing a step for one of the spare topmasts instead of the mainmast, and the men were fitting the rigging; the ship unfortunately had sprung a leak, and four hands at the pumps interfered very much with their task. As Ready had prophesied, before night the gale blew, the sea rose again with the gale, and the leaking of the vessel increased so much, that all other labour was suspended for that at the pump. For two more days did the storm continue, during which time the crew were worn out with fatigue—they could pump no longer: the ship, as she rolled, proved that she had a great deal of water in her hold—when, melancholy as were their prospects already, a new disaster took place, which was attended with most serious results. Captain Osborn was on the forecastle giving some orders to the men, when the strap of the block which hoisted up the maintop-gallant yard on the stump of the foremast gave way, the yard and sail came down on the deck, and struck him senseless. As long as Captain Osborn commanded them, the

sailors had so high an opinion of his abilities as a seaman, and were so encouraged by his cheerful disposition, that they performed their work well and cheerfully; but now that he was, if not killed, at all events senseless and incapable of action, they no longer felt themselves under control. Mackintosh was too much disliked by the seamen to allow his words to have any weight with them. They were regardless of his injunctions or requests, and they now consulted among themselves.

"The gale is broke, my men, and we shall have fine weather now," observed Ready, going up to the sailors on the forecastle.
"The wind is going down fast."

"Yes," replied one of the men, "and the ship is going down fast, that's quite as certain."

"A good spell at the pumps would do some good now," replied Ready. "What d'ye say, my lads?"

"A glass of grog or two would do us more," replied the seaman. "What d'ye say, my boys? I don't think that the captain would refuse us, poor fellow, if he could speak."

"What do you mean to do, my lads?" inquired Mackintosh; "not get drunk, I hope?"

"Why not?" observed another of the men; "the ship must go down soon."

"Perhaps she may—I will not deny it," said Mackintosh; "but that is no reason why we should not be saved; now, if you get drunk, there is no chance of anyone being saved, and my life is precious to me. I'm ready to join with you in anything you please, and you may decide what is to be done; but get drunk you shall not, if I can help it, that's certain."

"And how can you help it?" replied one of the seamen.

"Because two resolute men can do a great deal—I may say three, for in this instance Ready will be of my side, and I can call to my assistance the cabin passenger—recollect the firearms are all in the cabin. But why should we quarrel?—say at once what you intend to do; and if you have not made up your minds, will you listen to what I have to propose?"

As Mackintosh's courage and determination were well known, the seamen again consulted together, and then asked him what he proposed.

"We have one good boat left, the new yawl on the booms: the others, as you know, are washed away, with the exception of the little boat astern, which is useless, as she is knocked almost to pieces. Now we cannot be very far from some of the islands, indeed I think we are among them now. Let us fit out

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the boat with everything which we require, go about our work steadily and quietly, drink as much grog now as will not hurt us, and take a good provision of it with us. • The boat is complete with her masts, sails, and oars; and it's very hard if we do not save ourselves somewhere. Ready, do I give good advice or not?"

" You give very good advice, Mackintosh—only what is to become of the cabin passengers, the women, and children? and are you going to leave poor Captain Osborn, who lays there abaaft, breathless and insensible? or what do you mean to do?"

" We won't leave the Captain," said one of the seamen.

" No—no! " exclaimed the others.

" And the passengers? "

" Very sorry for them," replied the former spokesman; " but we shall have enough to do to save our own lives; the boat is not over large."

" Well, my lads, I agree with you," said Mackintosh. " Charity begins at home. What do you say, then?—shall it be so? "

" Yes," was the unanimous reply, and Ready knew that it was in vain to expostulate. In an hour everything was prepared. A long rope was made fast to the boat, which was brought to the gunnel ready for launching overboard, and then the ship's broadside was brought to the wind. Ready had taken no part in their labour; he had once or twice sounded the well, to ascertain if the water gained upon the ship, and then sat down by the side of Captain Osborn, who still remained insensible from the blow which he had received on his head. As the ship was brought to the wind, Mr. Seagrave came on deck and looked around him.

He perceived the boat ready for launching, the provisions and water at the gangway, the ship brought to the wind, and rolling slowly to the heave of the sea; at last he saw Ready sitting down by Captain Osborn, who was apparently dead. " What is all this, Ready? " inquired Mr. Seagrave. " Are they going to leave the ship? have they killed Captain Osborn? "

" No, sir—not quite so bad as that. Poor Captain Osborn was struck down by the fall of the yard, and has been insensible ever since; but, as to the other matter, I fear that is decided; you see they are launching the boat."

" But my poor wife, she will never be able to go—she cannot move—she is so ill! "

" I'm afraid, Mr. Seagrave, that they have no idea of taking either you, or your wife, or your children, with them."

"What! leave us here to perish? Merciful Heaven! how cruel—how barbarous!"

"It is not kind, Mr. Seagrave; but still you see it is the law of nature. I've seen all this before in my time," replied Ready gravely.

"My wife! my children!" cried Mr. Seagrave, covering his face with his hands. "But I will speak to them," continued he after a pause; "surely they will listen to the dictates of humanity; at all events, Mr. Mackintosh will have some power over them. Don't you think so, Ready?"

"Well, Mr. Seagrave, if I must speak, I confess to you that there is not a harder heart among them than that of Mr. Mackintosh, and it's useless speaking to him or any one of them."

"What must be done then, Ready?"

"We must put our trust in a merciful God, Mr. Seagrave, who will dispose of us as He thinks fit."

"We must. What! do not you go with them?"

"No, Mr. Seagrave. I have been thinking about it this last hour, and I have made up my mind to remain with you. They intend to take poor Captain Osborn with them, and give him a chance, and have offered to take me; but I shall stay here."

"To perish?" replied Mr. Seagrave, with surprise.

"As God pleases, Mr. Seagrave. I am an old man, and it is of little consequence; and I hope that I am a prepared man as far as I have been able. I tell you, Mr. Seagrave, I think much more of your children than I do of myself, I care little whether I am taken away a year or two sooner, but I do not like to see blossoms cut off in early spring; I may be of use if I remain, for I've an old head on my shoulders, and I could not leave you all to perish, when you *might* be saved if you only knew how to act. But here the seamen come—the boat is all ready, and they will now take poor Captain Osborn with them."

The sailors came aft, and lifted up the still insensible captain. As they were going away, one of them said, "Come, Ready, there's no time to lose."

"Never mind me, Williams; I shall stick to the ship," replied Ready. "I wish you success with all my heart, and, Mr. Mackintosh, I have but one promise to exact from you, and I hope you will not refuse me; which is, that if you are saved, you will then not forget those you leave here on board, and take measures for their being searched for among the islands."

"Nonsense, Ready! come into the boat," replied the first mate.

"I shall stay here, Mr. Mackintosh; and I only beg that you

will promise me what I ask. Acquaint Mr. Seagrave's friends with what has happened, and where it is most likely we may be found, if it please God to save us: that is all that is necessary. Do you promise me that?"

"Yes, I do, Ready, if you are determined to stay: but," continued he, going up to Ready, and whispering to him, "it is madness: come away, man!"

"Good-bye, Mr. Mackintosh," replied Ready, extending his hand. "You will keep your promise?"

After much further expostulation on the part of Mackintosh and the seamen, to which Ready gave a deaf ear, the boat was pushed off, and they made sail to the north-east.

CHAPTER VII

Despair of Mr. Seagrave—Mr. Seagrave comforted by Ready—Exertions of William and Ready—Signs of Land—Happiness of Childhood—Gloomy prospects—Hope somewhat restored—Discovery of Land—Steer for Land—Ship on Coral Rocks.

FOR some time after the boat had shov'd off from the ship, old Ready remained with his arms folded, watching it in silence. Mr. Seagrave stood by him: his heart was too full for utterance, for he imagined that as the boat increased her distance from the vessel, so did every ray of hope depart, and that his wife and children, himself and the old man who was by his side, were doomed to perish. His countenance was that of a man in utter despair. At last old Ready spoke.

"They think that they will be saved and we must perish, Mr. Seagrave; they forget that there is a Power above, who will Himself decide that point—a Power compared to which the efforts of weak men are as nought."

"True," replied Mr. Seagrave, in a low voice; "but still what chance can we have on a sinking ship, with so many helpless creatures around us, I confess that I cannot imagine."

"We must do our best, and submit to His will," replied Ready, who then went aft, and shifted the helm, so as to put the ship again before the wind.

As the old man had foretold to the seamen before they quitted the vessel, the gale was now over, and the sea had gone down considerably. The ship, however, dragged but slowly through the water, and after a short time Ready lashed the wheel and went

forward. On his return to the quarter deck, he found Mr. Seagrave had thrown himself down (apparently in a state of despair) upon the sail on which Captain Osborn had been laid after his accident.

"If you are praying, Mr. Seagrave, I am sorry to interrupt you; but if you are not, but are overcome with your situation, perhaps I may be able to give you some little hope."

"I have been praying," replied Mr. Seagrave, raising himself up, "and, since that, I have been trying to collect my thoughts, which I acknowledge to be very confused. The great pang will be to communicate to my wife our hopeless situation."

"If I thought our situation hopeless," replied Ready. "I would candidly say so. But, Mr. Seagrave, I shall speak as a seaman, and tell you what our possibilities are. The ship is half-full of water, from her seams having opened by the straining in the gale, and the heavy blows which she received; but, now that the gale has abated, she has recovered herself very much. I have sounded the well, and find that she had not made many inches within the last two hours, and probably, as she closes her seams, will make less. If, therefore, it pleases God that the fine weather should continue, there is no fear of the vessel sinking under us for some little time; and as we are now amongst the islands, it is not impossible, nay, it is very probable, that we may be able to run her ashore, and thus save our lives. I thought all of this when I refused to go in the boat, and I think now it would be better that you should go down into the cabin, and with a cheerful face encourage poor Mrs. Seagrave with the change in the weather, and the hopes of arriving in some place of safety. If she does not know that the men have quitted the ship, do not tell her; say that the steward is with the other men, which will be true enough, and, if possible, leave her in the dark as to what has taken place; Master William can be trusted, and if you will send him here to me, I will talk to him. What do you think, Mr. Seagrave?"

"I hardly know what to think, Ready, or how sufficiently to thank you for your self-devotion, if I may so term it, in this exigency. That your advice is excellent, and that I shall follow it, you may be assured; and, should we be saved from the death which at present stares us in the face, my gratitude——"

"Do not speak of that, sir; I am an old man with few wants, and whose life is of little use now. All I wish to feel is, that I am trying to do my duty in that situation into which it has pleased God to call me." Mr. Seagrave pressed the hand of Ready

and went down without making any reply. He found that his wife had been asleep for the last hour, and was not yet awake. The children were also quiet in their beds. Juno and William were the only two who were sitting up.

William made a sign to his father that his mother was asleep, and then said in a whisper, "I did not like to leave the cabin while you were on the deck, but the steward has not been here these two hours: he went to milk the goat for baby, and has not returned. We have had no breakfast, none of us."

"William, go on deck," replied his father. "Ready wishes to speak to you—I will stay here."

William went on deck to Ready, who soon explained to him the position in which they were placed; he pointed out to him the necessity of his doing all he could to assist his father and him, and not to alarm his mother in her precarious state of health. William, who, as it may be expected, looked very grave, did, however, immediately enter into Ready's views, and proceeded to do his best. "Now, Ready," said he, "you know the steward has left with the other men, and when my mother wakes she will ask why the children have had no breakfast. What can I do?"

"I don't know; but I think you can milk one of the goats if I show you how."

By the united exertions of Ready and William, the breakfast was prepared, while Mrs. Seagrave still continued in a sound sleep. The motion of the ship was now very little: she only rolled very slowly from one side to the other, for she was heavy with the water which had leaked into her; the sea and the wind had gone down, and the sun shone brightly over their heads; the boat had been out of sight some time, and the ship did not go through the water faster than three miles an hour, for she had no other sail upon her than the maintop-gallant sail hoisted up on the stump of the foremast. Ready, who had been some time down in the cabin, proposed to Mr. Seagrave that Juno and all the children should go on deck. "They cannot be expected to be quiet, sir; and, now that madam is in such a sweet sleep, it would be a pity to wake her. After so much fatigue, she may sleep for hours, and the longer the better; for you know that (in a short time, I trust) she will have to exert herself." Mr. Seagrave agreed to the good sense of this proposal, and went on deck with Juno and the children, leaving William in the cabin to watch his mother. Poor Juno was very much astonished when she came up the ladder and perceived the condition of the vessel and the absence of the men; but Mr. Seagrave told her what had

happened, and cautioned her against saying a word to Mrs. Seagrave.

"Look there, sir," said Ready, pointing out some floating seaweed to Mr. Seagrave.

"I perceive it," said Mr. Seagrave; "but what then?"

"That by itself would not be quite proof," replied Ready; "but we sailors have other signs and tokens. Do you see those birds hovering over the waves?"

"I do."

"Well, sir, those birds never go far from land, that's all; and now, sir, I'll go down for my quadrant; for, although I cannot tell the longitude just now, at all events I can find out the latitude we are in, and then by looking at the chart shall be able to give some kind of guess whereabout we are, if we see land soon."

"It is nearly noon now," observed Ready, reading off his quadrant; "the sun rises very slowly. What a happy thing a child is! Look, sir, at those little creatures playing about, and as merry now, and as unaware of danger, as if they were at home in their parlour. Although nothing pains me more when it does take place, I often think, sir, it is a great blessing for a child to be called away early; and that it is selfish in parents to repine."

"Perhaps it is," replied Mr. Seagrave, looking mournfully at his children.

"It's twelve o'clock, sir. I'll just go down and work the latitude, and then I'll bring up the chart."

Mr. Seagrave remained on the deck. He was soon in deep and solemn thought; nor was it to be wondered at; the ship a wreck and deserted—left alone on the wide water with his wife and helpless family, with but one to assist him; had that one deserted him as well as the rest, what would have been his position then? Utter helplessness! And now what had they to expect? Their greatest hopes were to gain some island, and, if they succeeded, perhaps a desert island, perhaps an island inhabited by savages—to be murdered, or to perish miserably of hunger and thirst. Or, allowing that they did find the means of subsistence, what then? Were they to remain there for their lives and die unknown and unheeded?

"Here is the chart, sir," said Ready, "and I have drawn a pencil line through out latitude: you perceive that it passes through this cluster of islands; and I think we must be among them, or very near. Now I must put something on for dinner, and then look sharp out for the land. Will you take a look round, Mr. Seagrave, especially ahead and on the bows?"

Ready went down to see what he could procure for dinner as the seamen, when they left the ship, had collected almost all which came first to hand. He soon procured a piece of salt beef and some potatoes, which he put into the saucepan, and then returned on deck.

Mr. Seagrave was forward, looking over the bows, and Ready went there to him.

"Ready, I think I see something, but I can hardly tell what it is; it appears to be in the air, and yet it is not clouds. Look there, where I point my finger."

"You're right, sir," replied Ready; "there is something; it is not the land which you see, but it is the trees upon the land, which are refracted, as they call it, so as to appear, as you say as if they were in the air. That is an island, sir, depend upon it; but I will go down and get my glass."

"It is the land, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready, after examining it with his glass; "yes, it is so," continued he, musing. "I wish that we had seen it earlier; and yet we must be thankful."

"Why so, Ready?"

"Only sir, as the ship forges so slowly through the water, I fear that we shall not reach it before dark, and I should have wished to have had daylight to have laid her nicely on it."

"There is very little wind now."

"Well, let us hope that there will be more," replied Ready; "if not, we must do our best;—but I must now go to the helm, for we must steer right for the island; it would not do to pass it, for, Mr. Seagrave, although the ship does not leak so much as she did, yet I must now tell you that I do not think that she could be kept more than twenty-four hours above water. I thought otherwise this morning when I sounded the well; but when I went down in the hold for the beef, I then perceived that we were in more danger than I had any idea of; however there is the land, and every chance of escape; so let us thank the Lord for all His mercies."

"Amen!" replied Mr. Seagrave.

Ready went to the helm and steered a course for the land, which was not so far distant as he had imagined, for the island was very low: by degrees the wind freshened up, and they went faster through the water; and now, the trees, which had appeared as if in the air, joined on to the land, and they could make out that it was a low coral island covered with groves of cocoanuts. Occasionally Ready gave the helm up to Mr. Seagrave, and went

forward to examine. When they were within three or four miles of it, Ready came back from the forecastle, and said, "I think I see my way pretty clear, sir: you see we are to the windward of the island, and there is always deep water to the windward of this sort of isle and reefs and shoals to leeward; we must, therefore, find some little cleft in the coral rock to dock her in as it were, or she may fall back into deep water after she has taken the ground, for sometimes these islands run up like a wall, with forty or fifty fathom of water close to the weather sides of them; but I do see a spot where I think she may be put on shore with safety. You see those three cocoanut trees close together on the beach? Now, sir, I cannot see them as I steer, so do you go forward, and if I am to steer more to the right, put out your right hand, and if to the left, the same with your left; and, when the ship's head is as it ought to be, then drop the hand which you have raised."

"I perfectly understand you, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave, who then went forward and directed the steering of the vessel as they neared the island. When they were within half a mile of it, the colour of the water changed, very much to the satisfaction of Ready, who knew that the weather side of the island would not be so steep as was usually the case; still it was an agitating moment as they ran on to the beach. They were now within a cable's length, and still the ship did not ground; a little nearer, and there was a grating at her bottom—it was the breaking of the coral trees, which grew below like forests under water; again she grated, and more harshly, then struck, and then again; at last she struck violently, as the swell lifted her farther on, and then remained fast and quiet. Ready let go the helm to ascertain the position of the ship. He looked over the stern and around the ship, and found that she was firmly fixed, fore and aft, upon a bed of coral rocks.

CHAPTER VIII

Alarm of Mrs. Seagrave—Resources enumerated by Ready—Mr. Seagrave repines—Mr. Seagrave rebuked by Ready—Recovers his Self-possession—Inventory of Live Stock—Preparations for Landing.

"ALL'S well so far, sir," said Ready to Mr. Seagrave; "and now let us return thanks to Heaven."

Ready kneeled down on the deck, took off his hat, and remained a short time in prayer. Mr. Seagrave did the same: the children

at first looked on, and wondered, and then knelt down by the side of them, following the example of Juno.

As they rose, William came up and said, "Father, my mother has sent me to you; she was awakened by the noise under the ship's bottom, and is frightened—will you go down to her?"

"Yes, my child, directly," said Mr. Seagrave.

"What is the matter my dear—and where have you all been?" exclaimed Mrs. Seagrave, when her husband went down below. "I have been so frightened—I was in such a sound sleep, and I was awakened with such a dreadful noise."

"Be composed, my dear," replied Mr. Seagrave: "we have been in great danger, and are now, I trust, in safety. Tell me, are you not better for your long sleep?"

"Yes, much better—much stronger; but do tell me what has happened."

"Much took place, dearest, before you went to sleep, which was concealed from you; but now, as I expect we shall go on shore in a short time——"

"Go on shore, my dear?"

"Yes, on shore. Now be calm, and hear what has happened, and how much we have reason to be grateful to Heaven."

Mr. Seagrave then entered into a detail of all that had passed. Mrs. Seagrave heard him without reply; and when he had finished, she threw herself in his arms and wept bitterly.

Mr. Seagrave remained with his wife, using all his efforts to console her, until Juno reappeared with the children, for it was now getting late; and then Mr. Seagrave returned on deck to consult with Ready.

"Well, sir," said Ready, when Mr. Seagrave went up to him, "I have been looking well about me, and I think that we have great reason to be thankful. The ship is fast enough, and will not move until some violent gales come on and break her up; but of that there is no fear at present! the little wind that there is, is going down, and we shall have a calm before morning."

"And when we get on shore?"

"Why, Mr. Seagrave, where there are cocoanut trees in such plenty as there are on that island, there is no fear of starvation, even if we had not the ship's provisions. I expect a little difficulty with regard to water, for the island is low—very low and small; but we cannot expect to find everything as we wish."

"I am thankful to the Almighty for our preservation, Ready; but still there are feelings which I cannot get over. Here we are cast away upon a desolate island, which perhaps no ship may ever

come near, so that there is little chance of our being taken off. Here we may live and die—here my children may grow up—yes, grow old, after they have buried you, their father, and their mother, and follow us to the same tomb. All their prospects in life, all mine—all blasted—all my hopes overthrown—it is a melancholy and cruel fate, Ready, and that you must acknowledge."

"Trust in God, sir, who, if He thinks fit, will restore you once more to your friends, and increase tenfold your flocks and herds."

Mr. Seagrave wished Ready good-night, and went below. Ready remained on deck.

CHAPTER IX

Mr. Seagrave and Ready land—Bounty of Providence—Return on Board—Delight of Tommy—Removal to the island—Erection of a Tent—Ready returns to the Ship.

As soon as Ready had executed his intentions and had fed the animals, he went to the cabin, and called Mr. Seagrave and William.

"Now, sir," said Ready, "what shall we do first—take some things on shore, or some of the children?"

"What do you say, Ready?"

"Why then, sir, with submission to you, I think, as the water is as smooth as glass, and we can land anywhere (for which we ought to be most thankful, having women and infants to take on shore), that you and I had better go first to reconnoitre,—it is not two hundred yards to the beach, and we shall lose but little time."

"Very well, Ready; I will first run down and tell my wife."

"And, in the meanwhile, I'll put the sail into the boat and one or two other things; it will be so much time saved."

Ready put the sail in, an axe, a musket, and some cord. Mr. Seagrave came up again; they both got into the boat, and pulled on shore.

When they landed they found that they could see nothing of the interior of the island, the cocoanut groves were so thick; but to their right they perceived, at about a quarter of mile off, a small sandy cove, with brushwood growing in front of the cocoanut trees.

"That," said Ready, pointing to it, "must be our location, as

the Americans call it. Let us get into the boat again, Mr. Seagrave, and pull to it; it is but a little way to pull, but a long way to carry the things in the boat."

In a few minutes they arrived at the cove; the water was shallow and as clear as crystal. Beneath the boat's bottom they could see beautiful shells, and the fish darting about in every direction.

The sand extended about forty yards from the water, and then commenced the brushwood, which ran back about forty yards farther, intermingled with single cocoanut trees until it joined the cocoanut grove. They pulled the boat in and landed.

"What a lovely spot this is!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave; "and perhaps mortal man has never yet visited it till now."

"Providence is bountiful, Mr. Seagrave," replied Ready, "and supplies our wants when we least expect it. If you please, we will walk a little way into the wood: take the gun as a precaution, sir; not that there appears to be much occasion for it—there is seldom anything wild on these islands, except a pig or two has been put on shore by considerate Christians. I once sailed with a captain on these seas, and he never landed on a desolate island without putting a couple of pigs or something on shore to breed, in case anybody should hereafter be shipwrecked; it was a kind thought."

"It was, Ready. Well, now that we are in the grove, what do you think?"

"I was looking for a place to fix a tent up for the present, sir, and I think on that little rise would be a very good place till we can look about us and do better; but we have no time now, sir, for we have plenty of trips to make before nightfall. If you please, we'll haul the sail and other articles on to the beach, and then return on board."

As soon as they arrived on board, Mr. Seagrave went down to cheer his wife with the account of what they had seen.

In a few minutes Juno and Tommy made their appearance on deck. Ready put some tools into the boat, and a couple of shovels, and once more they landed at the sandy cove. Tommy stared about him a great deal, but did not speak, until he saw the shells lying on the beach, when he screamed with delight, and began to pick them up as fast as he could; the dogs barked and galloped about, overjoyed at being once more on shore; and Juno smiled as she looked around her, saying to Ready, "What a nice place!"

"Now, Mr. Seagrave, I'll remain on shore with you a little. First, we'll load the musket in case of need, and then you can put

it out of the way of Master Tommy, who fingers everything, I observe. We will take up the sail between us. Juno, you can carry the tools; and then we can come back again for the spars, and the rope, and the other things. Come, Master Tommy, you can carry a shovel, at all events, and that will make you of some use. We must all work now."

"Here are two trees which will answer our purpose pretty well," said Ready, "as they are far enough apart; we must lash the spars up to them, and then throw the sail over, and bring it down to the ground at both ends; that will be a beginning, at all events; and I will bring some more canvas on shore, to set up the other tent between these other trees, and also to shut up the two ends of both of them; then we shall have a shelter for madam, and Juno and the younger children, and another for Master William, Tommy, and ourselves. Now, sir, I'll just help you to lash the spars, and then I'll leave you to finish while I go on board again."

"I shall do very well," replied Mr. Seagrave; "Juno can help me to pull the canvas out tight when I am ready."

"Yes, and in the meantime, Juno, take a shovel and level the inside of the tent nice and smooth, and throw out all those old cocoanut leaves, and look if you see any vermin lurking among them. Master Tommy, you must not run away; and you must not touch the axes, they will cut you if you do. It may be as well to say, Mr. Seagrave, that should anything happen, and you require any assistance, you had better fire off the gun, and I will come on shore to you immediately. But that's not very likely," continued Ready, who then walked down to the beach, and stepping into the boat, pulled on board of the ship.

CHAPTER X

**Tommy in Mischief—Tommy mounts Guard—Removal of Mrs. Seagrave
—Arrival at the Tent—Exhaustion of Ready.**

WHEN Ready returned on board, he first went down into the cabin to acquaint Mrs. Seagrave and William with what they had done. Mrs. Seagrave naturally felt anxious about her husband being on shore alone, and Ready informed her that they had agreed that, if anything should occur, Mr. Seagrave would fire the musket. He then went down into the sail-room to get some canvas, a new top-gallant sail, and a palm and needles with twine. Suddenly

the report of the musket was heard, and Mrs. Seagrave rushed out of the cabin in the greatest alarm; Ready seized another musket, jumped into the boat, and pulled on shore where he found Mr. Seagrave and Juno busy with the tent, and Master Tommy sitting on the ground crying very lustily. It appeared that, while Mr. Seagrave and Juno were employed, Master Tommy had crept away to where the musket was placed up on end against a cocoanut tree, and after pulling it about some little while, had touched the trigger. The musket went off; and, as the muzzle was pointed upwards, the charge had brought down two large cocoanuts, which fell close to where Tommy was under the tree, and had they hit him, would certainly have killed him.

"I had better return on board immediately, sir, and tell Mrs. Seagrave," said Ready.

"Do, pray, my good fellow," replied Mr. Seagrave.

Ready then returned to the ship, and explained matters, and then recommenced his labour.

Having put into the boat the sailmaker's bag with palm and needles, two mattresses, and blankets from the captain's state-room, the saucepan with the beef and pork, and a spar, which he towed astern, Ready found that he had as much as he could carry; but, as there was nobody but himself in it, he came on shore very well. Having, with the assistance of Mr. Seagrave and Juno, got all the things up to the knoll, Ready lashed the spar up for the second tent, and then leaving them to fix it up like the other, he returned again on board. Juno had cleaned the tent out very nicely, and said that she had not found any animals or insects among the leaves. Tommy, who was on his good behaviour, stood sentry over the beef and pork. Ready made two other trips to the ship, bringing with him more bedding, a bag of ship's biscuits, another of potatoes, plates, knives and forks, spoons, frying-pans, and other cooking utensils, and a variety of other articles. He then showed Juno how to fill up the ends of the first tent with canvas and sails he had brought on shore, so as to enclose it all round; Juno took the needle and twine, and worked very well. Ready, satisfied that she would be able to get on without them, now said, "Mr. Seagrave, we have but two hours more daylight, and it is right that Mrs. Seagrave should come on shore now; so, if you please, we'll go off and fetch her and the children. I think we shall be able to do very well for the first night; and it pleases God to give us fine weather, we may do a great deal more to-morrow—indeed, as long as the fine weather lasts, we must work hard in getting things on shore, for

one good gale would, in all probability, beat the vessel to pieces I stowed the hold myself, and know where most of the things are to be found, but I fear it will not be possible to get out many articles which would be useful."

As soon as they arrived on board, Mr. Seagrave went down to his wife to propose her going on shore. With some difficulty they were all placed in the boat and shoved off; but Mrs. Seagrave was so ill, that her husband was obliged to support her in his arms, and William took an oar. They landed very safely, and carried Mrs. Seagrave up to the tent, and laid her down on one of the mattresses. She asked for a little water.

"And I have forgotten to bring any with me; well, I am a stupid old man; but I'll go on board directly," said Ready; "to think I should be so busy in bringing other things on shore and forget the greatest necessary in life! The fact is, I intended to look for it on the island as soon as I could, as it would save a deal of trouble."

Ready returned on board as fast as he could, and brought on shore two kegs of fresh water, which he and William rolled up to the tent.

Juno had completely finished her task, and Mrs. Seagrave, having drunk some water, declared that she was much better.

"I shall not return on board any more to-night," said Ready, "I feel tired—very tired indeed."

"You must be, my good man," replied Mr. Seagrave; "you have been up many nights, and have worked very hard all day. Do not think of doing any more."

"And I haven't touched food this day, or even quenched my thirst," replied Ready, sitting down.

"You are ill, are you not, Ready?" said William.

"A little faint, Master William."

Mr. Seagrave then offered a prayer of thankfulness; and they all retired to rest.

CHAPTER XI

Beauty of the Scenery—Mr. Seagrave's Gratitude—How to produce Fire—Return to the Vessel—Unloading the Vessel—Preparation for Breakfast.

MR. SEAGRAVE was the first who awoke and arose from his bed on the ensuing morning. He stepped out of the tent and looked around him. The sky was clear and brilliant. A light breeze

ruffled o'er the surface of the water, and the tiny waves rippled one after another upon the white sand of the cove. To the left of the cove the land rose, forming small hills, behind which appeared the continuation of the cocoanut groves. To the right, a low ridge of coral rocks rose almost as a wall from the sea, and joined the herbage and brushwood at about a hundred paces, while the wreck of the *Pacific*, lying like some huge stranded monster, formed the prominent feature in the landscape. The sun was powerful where its beams could penetrate; but where Mr. Seagrave stood, the cocoanuts waved their feathery leaves to the wind, and offered an impervious shade. A feeling of extreme beauty of the scene, subdued by the melancholy created by the sight of the wrecked vessel, pervaded the mind of Mr. Seagrave as he turned back to his tent.

William woke up, and having received a caution from his father not to wake old Ready, he dressed himself and came out.

"Had I not better call Juno, father?" said William; "I think I can without waking Mamma, if she is asleep."

"Then do, if you can, my boy; and I will see what cooking utensils Ready has brought on shore."

William soon returned to his father, stating that his mother was in a sound sleep, and that Juno had got up without waking her or the two children.

"Well, we'll see if we cannot get some breakfast ready for them, William. Those dry cocoanut leaves will make an excellent fire."

"But, father, how are we to light the fire? we have no tinder-box or matches."

"No; but there are other ways, William, although, in most of them, tinder is necessary. The savages can produce fire by rubbing a soft piece of wood against a hard one. I'm afraid that we should be a long while doing that, but we can make tinder by wetting it and rubbing it on a rag or piece of paper, or indeed a piece of soft wood; and we have two ways of igniting it—one is by flint and steel, and the other by collecting the sun's rays into one focus by a magnifying glass."

"We have no magnifying glass."

"No; but we can obtain one out of a telescope when we go on board again."

"But father, when we have lighted the fire, what have we to cook? we have no tea or coffee."

"No, I do not think we have," replied Mr. Seagrave.

"But we have potatoes, father."

"Yes, William, but don't you think it would be better if we made our breakfast off the cold beef and pork and ship's biscuits for once, and not use the potatoes? We may want them all to plant, you know; but why should we not go on board of the ship ourselves? You can pull an oar pretty well, and we must all learn to work now, and not leave everything for poor old Ready to do."

Mr. Seagrave then went down to the cove: the little boat was lying on the beach, just lifted by the rippling waves; they pushed her off, and got into her. "I know where the steward kept the tea and coffee, father" said William, as they pulled on board. "Mamma would like some for breakfast, I'm sure, and I'll milk the goats for baby."

Although they were neither of them very handy at the oar, they were soon alongside of the ship; and having made the boat fast, they climbed on board.

William first went down to the cabin for the tea and coffee, and then left his father to collect other things while he went to milk the goats. After that he came back to his father.

"I have filled these two baskets full of a great many things, William, which will be very acceptable to your mamma."

In a short time everything was put into the boat, and they pulled on shore again. They found Juno, who had been washing herself, waiting for them at the cove, to assist to take up the things.

"Well, Juno, how do you find yourself this morning?"

"Quite well, massa," said Juno; and then pointing to the clear water, she said, "plenty fish here."

"Yes, if we only had lines," replied Mr. Seagrave. "I think Ready has both hooks and lines somewhere. Come, Juno, take up this bundle of linen to your tent: we can manage all the rest."

"Then, Juno, you may as well take this bottle of milk, which I got for little Albert's breakfast."

"Tankee, Massa William; dat very good of you"

"And you must be quick, Juno, for there's Tommy on his legs, and running about in his shirt."

When they arrived at the tent they found that everyone was awake except old Ready, who appeared still to sleep very sound. Mrs. Seagrave had passed a very good night, and felt herself much refreshed. William made some touch-paper, which he lighted with one of the glasses from the telescope, and they soon had a good fire. Mr. Seagrave went to the beach, and procured three large stones to rest the saucepan on; and in half an hour the water was boiling and the tea made.

CHAPTER XII

Ready taken by surprise—Assembled at Breakfast—Danger of Sharks—Landing useful Articles—Pig and Shark—Wise Precaution—Prognostics of the Weather—Maternal Affection—Value of the Cocoanut Tree—Brotherly Feeling.

JUNO had taken the children down to the cove, and, walking out into the water up to her knees, had dipped them in all over, as the shortest way of washing them, and had then dressed them and left them with their mother, while she assisted William to get the cups and saucers and plates for breakfast. Everything was laid out nice and tidy between the two tents, and then William proposed that he should awaken old Ready.

"Yes, my boy, you may as well now—he will want his breakfast; and, besides, he would not like to be away when we all meet to return thanks to God before we sit down to our meal."

William went and pushed Ready on the shoulder. "Ready, have you had sleep enough?" said William, as the old man sat up.

"Yes, Master William. I have had a good nap, I expect; and now I will get up, and see what I can get for breakfast for you all."

"Do," replied William, laughing.

Ready was soon dressed, for he had only taken off his jacket when he lay down. He put it on, and came out of the tent; when, to his astonishment, he found the whole party (Mrs. Seagrave having come out with the children) standing round the breakfast, which was spread on the ground.

"Good-morning, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave, extending her hand. Mr. Seagrave also shook hands with him.

"You have had a good long sleep, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, "and I would not waken you after your fatigue of yesterday."

"I thank you kindly, sir; and I am glad to see that madam is so well; and I am not sorry to see that you can do so well without me," continued Ready, smiling.

"Indeed, but we cannot, I'm afraid," replied Mrs. Seagrave; "had it not been for you and your kindness, where should we have been now?"

"We can get a breakfast ready without you," said Mr. Seagrave; "but without you, my good fellow, I think we never should have

required another breakfast by this time; but we will tell Ready all we have done while we eat our breakfast; now, my dear, if you please." Mrs. Seagrave then read a chapter from the Bible, and afterwards they all knelt down while Mr. Seagrave offered up a prayer.

While they were at breakfast, William told Ready how they had gone on board and what they had brought on shore, and he also mentioned how Juno had dipped all the children in the sea.

"But Juno must not do that again," replied Ready, "until I have made all safe; you know that there are plenty of sharks about these islands, and it is very dangerous to go into the water."

"Oh, Mr. Seagrave, what an escape they have had!" cried Mrs. Seagrave, shuddering.

"It's very true," continued Ready; "but they don't keep so much to the windward of the islands, where we are at present; but still that smooth cove is a very likely place for them to come into; so it's just as well not to go in again, Juno, until I have time to make a place for you to bathe in in safety; but we have plenty to do before we think of that, and as soon as we can get as much as we want from the ship, we must decide whether we shall stay here or not."

"Stay here or not, Ready!—what do you mean?"

"Why, we have not yet found any water, and that is the first necessary of life—if there is no water on this side of the island we must pitch our tents somewhere else."

"That's very true," replied Mr. Seagrave; "I wish we could find time to explore a little."

"So we can, sir, but we must not lose this fine weather. It may be rough to-morrow, and then we shall not be able to get anything from the ship. We had better go now. You, sir, William, and me. You and William can remain on board to collect the things, and I will land them on the beach for Juno to bring up."

The whole day was spent in landing every variety of article which they thought could be useful. All the small sails, cordage, twine, canvas, small casks, saws, chisels, and large nails, and elm and oak plank, were brought on shore before dinner. After they had taken a hearty dinner, they went to work again. The cabin tables and chairs, all their clothes, some boxes of candles, two bags of coffee, two of rice, two more of biscuits, several pieces of beef and pork, and bags of flour, for they could not manage to get a whole cask out, some more water, the grindstone, and

Mrs. Seagrave's medicine chest were then landed. When Ready came off again, he said, "Our poor boat is getting very leaky, and will not take much more on shore without being repaired; and Juno has not been able to get half the things up—they are too heavy for one person. I think we shall do pretty well now Mr. Seagrave; and we had better, before it is dark, get all the animals on shore. I don't much like to trust them to swim on shore; but they are awkward things in a boat. We'll try a pig, at all events; and while I get one up, do you and Master William tie the legs of the fowls, and put them into the boat: as for the cow, she cannot be brought on shore, she is still lying down, and I expect won't get up again any more; it is the way with those animals; however I have given her plenty of hay, and, if she don't rise, why I will kill her, and we can salt her down."

Ready went down below, and the squealing of the pig was soon heard; he came back on deck with it hanging over his back by the hind legs, and threw it into the sea over the gunnel; the pig floundered at first; but after a few seconds, turned its head away from the ship, and swam for the shore.

"He goes ashore straight enough," said Ready, who, with Mr. Seagrave and William, was watching the animal; but a minute afterwards, Ready exclaimed—

"I thought as much—we've lost him!"

"How?" replied Mr. Seagrave.

"D'y see that black thing above water pushing so fast to the animal—that's the back fin of a shark, and he will have the poor thing—there, he's got him!" said Ready, as the pig disappeared under the water with a heavy splash. "Well, he's gone; better the pig than your little children, Mr. Seagrave."

"Yes, indeed, God be praised! that monster might have been close to them at the time that Juno took them into the water."

"He was not far off, I reckon," replied Ready, "however, he must be content with what he has got, for he'll get no more. We'll go down now and tie the legs of the other four pigs, and bring them up; with what's already in the boat they will be a good load."

As soon as the pigs were in the boat, Ready sculled it on shore, while Mr. Seagrave and William brought up the goats and sheep ready for the next trip. Ready soon returned. "Now this will be our last trip for to-day, and, if I am any judge of the weather, our last trip for some days; it is banking up very thick in the offing. This trip we'll be able to put into the boat a bag of corn for the creatures, in case we require it, and then we may say good-bye

to the ship for a day or two at least. I have given the cow water, left a bucket or two with her, and a truss of hay; but I don't much expect we shall find her alive when we come back to the ship again."

They then all got into the boat, which was very deeply laden, for the corn was heavy, but they got safe on shore, although they leaked very much.

"That's what I call a good day's work, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready; "the little boat has done its duty well; but we must not venture in her again until I have put her into a little better condition."

They were not at all sorry, after their hard day's work, to find that Juno had prepared coffee for them; and while they were drinking it, they narrated to Mrs. Seagrave the tragical death of the poor pig by the shark. Mrs. Seagrave embraced her little boy, who was in her arms, when she heard the tale; and when she lifted up her head again there was a tear of thankfulness rolling down her cheek. Poor Juno appeared quite frightened at the danger which the children had been in, even now that it was all over.

"We shall have plenty to do here to-morrow," observed Mr. Seagrave, "in getting things into their places."

"We shall have plenty to do for some time, I expect," replied Ready. "In two months, or thereabouts, we shall have the rainy season come on, and we must be under cover before that time, if we possibly can. We can't expect this weather to last all the year round."

"What's the first thing we must do, Ready?" inquired Mr. Seagrave.

"To-morrow, we had better fix up another tent or two, to stow away all the articles we have brought on shore: that will be one good day's work; we shall then know where to lay our hands upon everything, and see what we want."

"That's very true; and what shall we do then?"

"Why then, sir, I think we must make a little expedition to explore the island, and find out where we must build our house,"

"Can we build a house?" said William.

"Oh yes, sir, and with more ease than you would think. There's no tree so valuable as the cocoanut tree; and the wood is so light that we can easily move it about."

"Why, what are the great merits of the cocoanut tree?" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"I'll tell you, madam: in the first place, you have the wood

to build the house with; then you have the bark with which you can make ropes and lines, and fishing net, if you please; then you have the leaves for thatching your house, and also for thatching your head if you please, for you may make good hats out of it, and baskets also; then you have the fruit, which, as a nut, is good to eat, and very useful in cooking; and in the young nut is the milk, which is also very wholesome; then you have the oil to burn, and the shell to make cups of, if you haven't any, and then you can draw toddy from the tree, which is very pleasant to drink when fresh, but will make you tipsy if it is kept too long; and then, after that, you may turn the toddy into arrack, which is a very strong spirit. Now there is no tree which yields so many useful things to man, for it supplies him with almost everything."

"I had no idea of that," replied Mrs. Seagrave.

"At all events, we've plenty of them," said William.

"Yes, Master William, there's no want of them; and I am glad of it, for had there been but few, I should not have liked to destroy them. People might be wrecked here, as well as ourselves, and without the good fortune that we have had in getting so many necessaries, and more than necessaries, on shore; and they might be obliged to depend wholly upon the cocoanut trees for their support."

"Well, I think it's time for us all to go to bed," said Mr. Seagrave. "William, bring your mamma the Bible."

CHAPTER XIII

Mrs. Seagrave's Anxiety—Mrs. Seagrave reproved—Ready's Disinterestedness—Preparations for the Journey—Tommy at the Grindstone—The Parting.

WHEN breakfast was over the next morning, Ready observed, "Now, Mr. Seagrave, we must hold a council of war, and decide upon an exploring party for to-morrow; and when we have settled that, we will find some useful way of employing ourselves for the rest of the day. The first question is, of whom is the party to consist?—and upon that I wish to hear your opinion."

"Why, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave, "it appears to me that you and I should go."

"Surely not both of you, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Seagrave.

"You can do without my husband, can you not, Ready?"

"I certainly should have liked to have had Mr. Seagrave to

advise with, ma'am," replied Ready; "but still I have thought upon it, and do not think that Master William would be quite sufficient protection for you; or, at all events, you would not feel that he was, which is much the same thing; and so, perhaps, if Mr. Seagrave has no objection, it would perhaps be better that he remained with you."

"Would you go alone, then, Ready?" said Mr. Seagrave.

"No, sir, I do not think that would be right, either—some accident might happen; there is no saying what might happen, although there is every appearance of safety; but we are in the hands of Providence, who doeth with us as He thinks fit. I should like, therefore, to have someone with me; the question is, whether it be Master William or Juno?"

"Take me." said Tommy.

"Take you, Master Tommy!" said Ready laughing; "then I must take Juno to take care of you. No; I think they cannot spare you. Your mamma will want you when we are gone; you are so useful in gathering wood for the fire; so I must have either Juno or your brother William."

"And which would you prefer, Ready?" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Master William, certainly, ma'am, if you will let him go with me, as you could ill spare the girl. I was only afraid you would raise some objection."

"Indeed, I do not like it; I would rather lose Juno for a time," replied Mrs. Seagrave.

"My dear wife," said Mr. Seagrave, "what did Ready just now say?—that we are in the hands of Providence. Recollect how Providence has preserved us in such awful dangers—how we are landed in safety. And now, will you not put trust in that Providence, when the dangers are, as I trust, only imaginary?"

"I was wrong, my dear husband, very wrong; but sickness and suffering have made me, I fear, not only nervous and frightened, but selfish; I must and will shake it off. If you think, my dear husband, that it would be better that you should go with Ready, instead of William, I am quite content; I was very wrong indeed, to raise an objection at the time. Go, then, with Ready, and may Heaven protect you both!"

"No, ma'am," replied Ready, "Master William will do just as well. Indeed ma'am, I would go by myself with pleasure: I have no fears of anything happening, but still we know not what the day may bring forth, and I might be taken ill—I might hurt myself—I am an old man, you know."

" Well then, William shall go with you, Ready; that point's settled," observed Mr. Seagrave: " what is ~~the~~ next? "

" The next is to prepare for the journey. We must take some provisions and water with us, a gun and some ammunition, a large axe for me, and one of the hatchets for Master William; and, if you please, Romulus and Remus, the two dogs, had better come with us, and Vixen shall remain with you. Juno, put a piece of beef and a piece of pork into the pot. Master William, will you fill four quart bottles with water, while I sew up a knapsack out of canvas for each of us? "

" And what shall I do, Ready? " said Mr. Seagrave.

" Why, sir, if you will have the kindness to sharpen the axe and the hatchet on the grindstone, it would be of great service, and Master Tommy can turn it, he is such a strong little man, and so fond of work."

Before they went to prayers and retired for the night, the axe was sharpened, the knapsacks made, and everything else ready.

" When do you intend to start, Ready? " said Mr. Seagrave.

" Why, sir, I should like to get off at the dawn of day, when the heat is not so great."

" And when do you intend to come back? " said Mrs. Seagrave.

" Why, madam, we have provisions enough for three days: if we start to-morrow morning, which is Wednesday, I hope to be back some time on Friday evening; but I won't be later than Saturday morning if I can help it."

" Good-night—and good-bye, mother," said William, " for I shall not see you to-morrow."

" God bless and protect you, my dear child," replied Mrs. Seagrave. " Take care of him, Ready, and good-bye to you till we meet."

Mrs. Seagrave went into the tent to hide the tears which she could not suppress.

CHAPTER XIV

Commencement of Journey—Novel way-marks—Anxiety about Water—
Advantage of Experience—Sudden Alarm—Prepare for the Worst—
Breakfast—Change of Scene.

READY was up before the sun had appeared, and he awakened William; they dressed in silence, because they did not wish that Mrs. Seagrave should be disturbed. The knapsacks had been already packed, with two bottles of water in each, wrapped with

cocoanut leaves to prevent their breaking, and the beef and pork divided between each knapsack. Ready's, which was larger than William's, held the biscuits and several other things Ready had prepared in case they might require them; and round his waist he twisted two cords, to tie the dogs if required.

As soon as the knapsacks were on, Ready took the axe and gun, and asked William if he thought he could carry a small spade on his shoulder, which they had brought on shore along with the shovels. William replied that he could; and the dogs, who appeared to know they were going, were all ready standing by them, when Ready went to one of the small water-casks, took a drink himself, gave one to William, and then as much to the dogs as they would drink. Having done this, just as the sun rose, they turned into the cocoanut grove, and were soon out of sight of the tents.

"Now, Master William, do you know," said Ready, stopping after they had walked twenty yards, "by what means we may find our way back again; for you see this forest of trees is rather puzzling, and there is no path to guide us?"

"No, I am sure I cannot tell: I was thinking of the very same thing when you spoke; and of Tom Thumb, who strewed peas to find his way back, but could not do it, because the birds picked them all up."

"Well, Tom Thumb did not manage well, and we must try to do better; we must do as the Americans always do in their woods,—we must *blaze* the trees."

"Blaze them! what, set fire to them?" replied William.

"No, no, Master William. *Blaze* is a term they use (why, I know not, except that there must be a term for everything) when they cut a slice of the bark off the trunk of a tree, just with one blow of a sharp axe, as a mark to find their way back again. They do not blaze every tree, but about every tenth tree as they go along, first one to the right, and then one to the left, which is quite sufficient; and it is very little trouble,—they do it as they walk along, without stopping. So now we'll begin: you take the other side, it will be more handy for you to have your hatchet in your right hand; I can use my left. See now—just a slice off the bark—the weight of the axe does it almost, and it will serve for a guide through the forest for years."

"What an excellent plan!" observed William, as they walked along, occasionally marking the trees.

"But I have another friend in my pocket," replied Ready, "and I must use him soon."

"What is that?"

"Poor Captain Osborn's pocket compass! You see, William, the *blazing* will direct us how to go back again; but it will not tell us what course we are now to steer. At present, I know we are going right, as I can see through the wood behind us; but by and by we shall not be able, and then I must make use of the compass."

"I understand that very well; but tell me, Ready, why do you bring the spade with us—what will be the use of it? You never said you were going to take one yesterday morning."

"No, Master William, I did not, as I did not like to make your mother anxious about anything; but the fact is, I am very anxious myself about one thing, and that is as to whether there is any water on this island; if there is not, we shall have to quit sooner or later, to, although we may get water by digging in the sand, it would be too brackish to use for any time, and would make us all ill. We have not much on shore now; and if the bad weather comes on, we may not be able to get any more from the wreck. Now, very often, there will be water if you dig for it, although it does not show above ground; and therefore I brought the spade."

"You think of everything, Ready."

"No, I do not, Master William; but in our present situation, I think of more things than perhaps your father and mother would; they have never known what it is to be put to their shifts—they have never been in situations requiring them to think about such things; but a man like me, who has been all his life at sea, and who has been wrecked, and suffered hardships and difficulties, and has been obliged to think or die, has a greater knowledge, not only from his own sufferings, but by hearing how others have acted when they were in distress. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention; and it's very true, Master William, for it sharpens a man's wits; and it is very curious what people do contrive when they are compelled to do so, especially seamen."

"And where are we going to now, Ready?"

"Right to the leeward side of the island; and I hope we shall be there before it is dark."

"Why do you call it the leeward side of the island?"

"Because among these islands the winds almost always blow one way: we landed on the windward side; the wind is at our back; now put up your finger, and you will feel it even among the trees."

"No, I cannot." replied William, as he held up his finger.

"Then wet your finger, and try again."

William wet his finger in his mouth, and held it up again.

"Yes, I do feel it now," said he; "but why is that?"

"Because the wind blows against the wet, and you feel the cold."

As Ready said this, the dogs growled, then started forward and barked.

"What can be there?" cried William.

"Stand still, Master William," replied Ready, cocking his gun, "and I will go forward to see." Ready advanced cautiously with the gun to his hip. The dogs barked more furiously; and at last, out of a heap of cocoanut leaves collected together, out burst all the pigs which had been brought on shore, grunting and galloping away as fast as they could, with the dogs in pursuit of them.

"It's only the pigs, Master William," said Ready, smiling; "I never thought I should be half frightened by a tame pig. Here, Romulus! here, Remus! come back!" continued Ready, calling to the dogs. "Well, Master William, this is our first adventure."

"I hope we shall not meet with any more dangerous," replied William, laughing; "but I must say that I was alarmed."

"No wonder; for although not likely, it is possible there may be wild animals on this island, or even savages; we must always be prepared for the worst in an unknown country; but being alarmed is one thing, Master William, and being afraid is another; a man may be alarmed and stand his ground as you did; but a man that is afraid will run away."

"I do not think I shall ever run away and leave you, Ready, if there is danger."

"I'm sure you will not, Master William; but still you must not be rash: and now we will go on again as soon as I have uncocked my gun. While I think of it, Master William, as you may have to carry one very often, never by any chance leave your gun cocked; I have seen more accidents happen from people cocking their guns, and forgetting to uncock them afterwards, than you can have any idea of."

"Recollect, until you want to fire, *never cock your gun*. Now I must look at the compass, for we have turned about, so that I do not know which way we are to go. All's right now—come along, dogs!"

Ready and William continued their way through the cocoanut grove for more than an hour longer, marking the trees as they

went along; they then sat down to take their breakfast, and the two dogs lay down by them.

"Don't give the dogs any water, Master William, nor any of the salt meat; give them biscuit only."

"But they are very thirsty; may not I give them a little?"

"No: we shall want it all ourselves, in the first place; and, in the next, I wish them to be thirsty. And, Master William, take my advice, and only drink a small quantity of water at a time: it is quite sufficient to quench the thirst; and the more you drink, the more you want."

"Then I should not eat so much salt meat."

"Very true; the less you eat the better, unless we find water and fill our bottles again."

"But we have our axes, and can always cut down a cocoanut, and get the milk from the young nuts."

"Very true; and fortunate it is that we have that to resort to; but still we could not do very well on cocoanut milk alone, even if it were to be procured all the year round. Now, Master William, we will go on if you do not feel tired."

"Not in the least; I am tired of seeing nothing but the stems of the cocoanut trees, and shall be very glad when we are through the wood."

"Then the faster we walk the better," said Ready: "as far as I could judge as we were coming to the island, we must be about half-way across now."

Ready and William recommenced their journey; and, after half an hour's walking, they found that the ground was not so level as it had been—sometimes they went gradually uphill, at others down.

"I am very glad to find the island is not so flat here, Master Willy; we have a better chance of finding water."

"But look, it is much steeper before us," replied William, as he barked a tree; "It's quite a hill."

"So much the better—let us push on."

The ground now became more undulating, although still covered with cocoanut trees, even thicker together than before. They continued their march, occasionally looking at the compass, until William showed symptoms of weariness, for the wood had become more difficult to get through than at first.

CHAPTER XV

A beautiful Scene—Dinner—Sea-anemones—A Turtle—An important Discovery—The Hour of Rest.

SOON they reached the top of the hill and there was the sea in the distance.

"Oh! how beautiful!" exclaimed William. "I'm sure mamma would like to live here. I thought the other side of the island very pretty, but it's nothing compared to this."

"It's very beautiful, Master William," replied Ready thoughtfully.

Perhaps a more lovely scene could scarcely be imagined. The cocoanut grove terminated about a quarter of a mile from the beach very abruptly, for there was a rapid descent for about thirty feet from where they stood to the land below, on which was a mixture of little grass knolls and brushwood, to about fifty yards from the water's edge, where it was met with dazzling white sand, occasionally divided by narrow ridges of rock which ran inland.

The water was of a deep blue, except where it was broken into white foam on the reefs, which extended for miles from the beach, and the rocks of which now and then showed themselves above water. On the rocks were perched crowds of gannets and men-of-war birds, while others wheeled in the air, every now and then darting down into the blue sea, and bringing up in their bills a fish out of the shoals, which rippled the water, or bounded clear of it in their gambols. The form of the coast was that of a horseshoe bay—two points of land covered with shrubs extending far out on each side. The line of the horizon, far out to sea, was clear and unbroken.

Ready remained for some time without speaking; he scanned the horizon right and left; he surveyed the reefs in the distance; and then he turned his eyes along the land. At last William said—

"What are you thinking of, Ready?"

"Why, I am thinking that we must look for water as fast as we can."

"But why are you so anxious?"

"Because, Master Willy, I can see no island to leeward of us, as I expected, and therefore there is less chance of getting off

this island; and this bay, although very beautiful, is full of reefs, and I see no inlet, which makes it awkward for many reasons. But we cannot judge at first sight. Let us now sit down and take our dinner, and after that we will explore a little. Stop—before we leave where we stand we must make a good mark upon the trees close to where we have come out of the wood, or we shall not find our *blaze* again in a hurry when we wish to go back again."

Ready cut two wide marks in the stems of the cocoanut trees, and then descended with William to the low ground, where they sat down to eat their dinner. As soon as their meal was finished, they first walked down to the water's edge, and Ready turned his eyes inland to see if he could discover any little ravine or hollow which might be likely to contain fresh water. "There are one or two places there," observed Ready, pointing to them with his finger, "where the water has run down in the rainy season: we must examine them carefully, but not now; to-morrow will be time enough. I want to find out whether there is any means of getting our little boat through the reef of rocks, or otherwise we shall have very hard work (if we change our abode to this spot) to bring all our stores through that wood; it would take us weeks, if not months; so we will pass the rest of this day in examining the coast, Master William, and to-morrow we will try for fresh water."

"Look at the dogs, Ready, they are drinking the sea-water, poor things."

"They won't drink much of that, I expect; you see they don't like it already."

"But what is that?" cried William, pointing to the sand—"that round dark thing?"

"That's what I am very glad to see, Master William: it's a turtle; they come up about this time in the evening to drop their eggs, and then they bury them in the sand."

"Can't we catch them?"

"Yes, we can catch them if we go about it quietly; but you must take care not to go behind them, or they will throw such a shower of sand upon you, with their hind flappers or fins, that they would blind you and escape at the same time. The way to catch them is to get at their heads and turn them over on their backs by one of the fore-fins, and then they cannot turn back again."

"Let us go and catch that one."

"Indeed, Master William, I should think it very foolish to do

it, as we could not take it away, and it would die to-morrow from the heat of the sun. It's not right to take life away uselessly, and if we destroy that turtle now, we may want it another time."

"I did not think of that, Ready: if we come to live here, I suppose we shall catch them whenever we want them."

"No, we shall not, for they only come on shore in the breeding season; but we will make a turtle pond somewhere, which they cannot get out of, but which the sea flows into; and then when we catch them we will put them into it, and have them ready for use as we require them."

"That will be a very good plan," replied Willian.

They now continued their walk; and, forcing their way through the brushwood which grew thick upon the point of land, soon arrived at the end of it.

"What is that out there?" said Willian, pointing to the right of where they stood.

"That is another island, Master Willian, which I am very glad to see, even in that direction, although it will not be so easy to gain it, if we are obliged to leave this for want of water; it is, however possible that we might. It is a much larger island than this, at all events," continued Ready, scanning the length of the horizon, along which he could see the tops of the trees. "Well, Master Willy, we have done very well for our first day. I am rather tired, and so, I presume, are you, so now we will go and look for a place to lie down and pass the night."

They returned to the high ground where the cocoanut grove ended, and collecting together several branches and piles of leaves, made a good soft bed under the trees.

"And now we'll have a little water, and go to bed. Look, Master Willian, at the long shadow of the trees! the sun has nearly set."

"Shall I give the dogs some water now, Ready? see poor Ready is licking the sides of the bottles."

"No, do not give them any: it appears to be cruel, but I want the intelligence of the poor animals to-morrow, and the want of water will make them very keen, and we shall turn it to good account. So now, Willian, we must not forget to return thanks to a merciful God, and to beg His care over us for this night."

CHAPTER XVI

Search for Water—Sagacity of Dogs—Water discovered—Site for a new House—A Shark—Return to the Cove.

WILLIAM slept as sound as if he had been on shore in England upon a soft bed in a warm room--so did old Ready, and when they woke the next morning it was broad daylight. The poor dogs were suffering for want of water, and it pained William very much to see them with their tongues out, panting and whining as they looked up to him. "Now, Master William," said Ready, "shall we take our breakfast before we start, or have a walk first?"

"Ready, I cannot really drink a drop of water myself, and I am thirsty, unless you give a little to these poor dogs."

"I pity the poor dumb creatures as much as you do, Master Willy; depend upon it, it's not out of unkindness; on the contrary, it is kindness to ourselves and them too, which makes me refuse it to them; however, if you like, we will take a walk first, and see if we can find water. Let us first go to the little well to the right, and if we do not succeed, we will try farther on, where the water has run down during the rainy season." William was very glad to go, and away they went, followed by the dogs, Ready having taken up the spade, which he carried on his shoulder. They soon came to the dell, and the dogs put their noses to the ground, and snuffed about; Ready watched them; at last they lay down panting.

"Let us go on, sir," said Ready thoughtfully; they went on to where the run of water appeared to have been—the dogs snuffed about more eagerly than before.

"You see, Master William, these poor dogs are now so eager for water, that if there is any, they will find it out where we never could. I don't expect water above ground, but there may be some below it. This beach is hardly far enough from the water's edge, or I should try in the sand for it."

"In the sand!—but would it not be salt?" replied William.

"No, not if at a good distance from the sea-beach; for you see, William, the sand by degrees filters the sea water fresh, and very often when the sand runs in a long way from the high-water mark, if you dig down, you will find good fresh water, at other times it is a little brackish, but still fit for use. I wish that

this fact were better known among seamen than it is, it would have saved many a poor fellow from a great deal of agony. There's nothing so dreadful as being without water, Master William. I know what it is to be on an allowance of half a pint a day, and I assure you it is cruel work."

"Look, Ready, at Romulus and Remus—how hard they are digging with their paws there in the hollow."

"Thanks to Heaven that they are, Master William; you don't know how happy you have made me feel; for, to tell you the truth, I was beginning to be alarmed."

"But why do they dig?"

"Because there is water there, poor animals. Now you see the advantage of having kept them in pain for a few hours; it is in all probability the saving of all of us, for we must have either found water or quitted this island. Now let us help the poor dogs with the spade, and they shall soon be rewarded for their sufferings."

Ready walked quickly to where the dogs continued digging: they had already got down to the moist earth, and were so eagerly at work, that it was with difficulty he could get them out of his way to use his spade. He had not dug two feet before the water trickled down, and in four or five minutes the dogs had sufficient to plunge their noses in, and to drink copiously.

"Look at them, sir; how they enjoy it. Now we have everything we can wish for on this island, and if we are only content, we may be happy—ay, much happier than are those who are worrying themselves to heap up riches, not knowing who shall gather them."

"That is a plenteous spring, depend upon it, sir," said Ready, as they walked back to where they had slept and left their knapsacks; "but we must clear it out farther up among the trees, where the sun cannot reach it, and then it will be cool, and not be dried up. We shall have plenty of work for the next year at least, if we remain here. Where we are now will be a capital spot to build our house on."

As soon as the breakfast was over, Ready said, "Now we must go down and explore the other point, for you see, Master William, I have not yet found a passage through the reef, and as our little boat must come round this side of the island, it is at the point on this side that I must try to find an entrance."

They soon arrived at the end of the point of land, and found that there was a passage of many yards wide. The sea was so smooth, and the water so clear that they could see down to the

rocky bottom, and watched the fish as they darted along. "Look there," said Willy, pointing out, about fifty yards from the beach, "a great shark, Ready."

"Yes, I see him, sir," replied Ready: "there's plenty of them here, depend upon it; and you must be very careful how you get into the water here: the sharks always keep to the leeward of the island, and for one you'll find where Juno bathed your little brother, you will find fifty here. I'm quite satisfied now, William, we shall do very well, and all we have now to think of is moving away from the other side of the island as fast as possible."

"Shall we go back to-day?"

"Yes, I think so, for we shall only be idle here, and your mother is anxious about you, depend upon it. It is not twelve o'clock, I shoud think, and we shall have plenty of time; for you see it is one thing to walk through a wood and mark your way, and another to go back again with the path pointed out to you. So I think we had better start at once; we will leave the spade and axe here, for it is no use taking them back again. The musket I will carry, for although it is not likely to be wanted, still we must always be prepared. First, let us go back and look at the spring, and see how the water flows, and then we will be off."

They found the hole which Ready had dug quite full of water, and, tasting it, it proved very sweet and good. Overjoyed at this discovery, they covered up the articles they agreed to leave behind them with some boughs under the notched cocoanut trees, and, calling the dogs, set off on their journey back again to the cove.

CHAPTER XVII

Symptoms of an approaching Storm—Hauling up the Boat—Work for Tommy—Threatening Appearances—Ready's Reflections—All prepared for the Worst.

GUIDED by the marks made on the trees, William and Ready made rapid progress in their return, and in less than two hours found themselves almost clear of the wood, which had taken them nearly eight hours to force their way through on the day before.

"I feel the wind now, Ready," observed William, "and we must be nearly through the wood; but it appears to me to be very dark."

"I was just thinking the same, sir," replied Ready. "I should not wonder if there is a storm brewing up; and if so, the sooner we are back again the better, for your mother will be frightened."

As they proceeded, the rustling and waving of the boughs of the trees, and ever and anon a gust of wind, followed by a moaning and creaking sound, proved that such was the fact; and as they emerged from the grove, they perceived that the sky, as it became visible to them, was of one dark leaden hue, and no longer of the brilliant blue which it usually had presented to their sight.

"There is indeed a gale coming on, Master William," said Ready, as they cleared the wood: "let us go on to the huts as fast as possible, for we must see that all is as secure as we can make it."

The dogs now bounded forward; and at their appearance at the huts Mr. Seagrave and Juno came out, and seeing Ready and William advancing, made known the welcome tidings to Mrs. Seagrave, who, with the children, had remained within. In a moment more William was pressed in his mother's arm.

"I am glad that you are come back, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, taking him by the hand after he had embraced William, "for fear that bad weather is coming on."

"I am sure of it," replied Ready, "and we must expect a blusterous night. It indeed looks threatening. This will be one of the storms which are forerunners of the rainy season. However, sir, we have good news for you, and must only take this as a warning to hasten our departure as soon as possible. We shall have fine weather after this for a month or so, although we must expect a breeze now and then. However, we must work hard, and do our best; and now, if you please, sir, you and Juno, Master William and I, will take the first precaution necessary, which is to go down and, between us, haul up our little boat as far from the beach as we possibly can, for the waves will be high and run a long way up, and our boat will be our main dependence soon."

The four went down as soon as Ready had sawed the ends of the spars which had been cut off into three rollers, to fix under the keel; with the help afforded by them, the boat was soon hauled up high into the brushwood, where it was considered to be perfectly safe.

Ready, assisted by Mr. Seagrave, got out some heavy canvas and lines, and commenced putting it as a double cover over the tents, to keep out the rain; they also secured the tents with guys and stays of rope, so as to prevent them being blown down; while Juno with a shovel deepened the trench which had been made

round the tents, so that the water might run off more easily. They did not leave off work until all was completed, and then they sat down to a late meal. During the time they were at work, Ready had made Mr. Seagrave acquainted with what they had discovered and done during the exploring expedition, and the adventure with the pigs made them all laugh heartily.

As the sun went down, the weather threatened still more; the wind now blew strong, and the rocky beach was lashed by the waves and white with spray, while the surf roared as it poured in and broke upon the sand in the cove. The whole family had retired to bed except Ready, who said that he would watch the weather a little before he turned in. The old man walked towards the beach and leaned against the gunnel of the little boat, which they had hauled up in the brushwood, and there he remained. "Yes," thought he, "the winds and the waves are summoned to do His bidding, and evenly do they work together—as one rises, so does the other; when one howls, the other roars in concert—hand in hand they go in their fury and their force. Will those timbers which bore us here so miraculously hold together till morning? I should think not. They will snap as yarns; and by to-morrow's dawn, the fragments of the stout ship will be washing and tossing on the wild surf. Well, it will be a kindness to us, for the waters will perform the labour which we could not; they will break up the timbers for our use, and throw on shore from the hold those articles which we could not reach with our little strength. We shall have more cause to be thankful. The storm will soon be at its height," thought he: "I will watch the tents, and see how they stand up against its force." Ready turned away to walk to the tents; and, as he did so, the rain came pattering down, and the wind howled louder than before. In a minute or two the darkness became so intense that he could hardly find his way back to the tents. He turned round, but could not see, for he was blinded by the heavy rain. As nothing could be done, the old man went into the tent, and sheltered himself from the storm, although he would not lie down lest his services might be required. Although the others had retired to bed, with the exception of Tommy and the children they had not taken off their clothes; Mr. Seagrave had thrown himself down without undressing; and William, perceiving this, had done the same. Mrs. Scaggrave, although she would not show her alarm, had also remained dressed, and Juno had followed her example.

CHAPTER XVIII

Tents blown down—Morning after the Storm—Fine Weather prophesied—Ready's Plans for the Day.

THE storm now raged furiously, the lightning was accompanied by loud peals of thunder, and the children awoke and cried with fright, till they were hushed to sleep again. The wind howled as it pressed with all its violence against the tents, while the rain poured off in torrents. One moment the canvas of the tents would bulge in, and the cords which held it strain and crack; at another, an eddy of wind would force out the canvas, which would flap and flap, while the rain found many an entrance. The night was intensely dark, and the fury of the elements was horrible. As we stated in the first part of our narrative, the tent in which Mrs. Seagrave and the children reposed was on the outside of the others, and therefore the most exposed. It was about midnight that the wind burst on them with greater violence than before. A loud crash was heard by Ready and Mr. Seagrave, followed by the shrieks of Mrs. Seagrave and Juno; the pegs of the tent had given way, and the inmates were exposed to the fury of the elements. Ready rushed out, followed by Mr. Seagrave and William. So strong was the wind and beating rain, and such was the darkness, that it was with some difficulty that by their united efforts the women and children could be extricated. Master Tommy was the first taken up by Ready: his courage had all gone, and he was bellowing most furiously. William took Albert in charge and carried him into the other tent, where Tommy sat in his wet shirt roaring most melodiously. Juno, Mrs. Seagrave, and the little girl were at last carried away and taken into the other tent: fortunately no one was hurt, although the frightened children could not be pacified, and joined a chorus with Tommy. Nothing more could be done except putting the children into the beds, and then the whole party sat up the remainder of the night listening to the noise of the wind, the roaring of the sea, and the loud patters of the rain against the canvas; and a dreadful and weary and melancholy night they did pass, anxiously waiting for the morning. At dawn of day, Ready went out of the tent, and found that the gale had spent its force, and had already much abated; but it was not one of those bright glorious mornings to which they had been accustomed since their

arrival at the island: the sky was still dark, and the clouds were chasing each other wildly; there was neither sun nor blue sky to be seen; it still rained, but only at intervals, and the earth was soft and spongy; the little cove, but the day before so beautiful, was now a mass of foaming and tumultuous waves, and the surf was thrown many yards upon the beach; the horizon was confused—you could not distinguish the line between the water and the sky, and the whole shore of the island was lined with a white foam. Ready turned his eyes to where the ship had been fixed on the rocks; it was no longer there—the whole frame had disappeared; but the fragments of it, and the contents of the holds, were floating about in every direction, or tossing amongst the surf on the beach.

"I thought as much," said Ready, pointing to where the ship had lain, as he turned round and found that Mr. Seagrave had followed him; "look, sir, this gale has broken her up entirely. This is a warning to us not to remain here any longer; we must make the most of the fine weather which we may have before the rainy season sets in—and we have no time to spare, sir, I can tell you."

"I agree with you, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave.

"We had better work hard to-day," said Ready, "for we may save a good many things, which may be dashed to pieces on the rocks if we do not haul them on the beach. We can do without Juno; and I don't think we want Master Tommy, who must stay here and take care of his mamma."

CHAPTER XIX

Collecting the Stores—Cow devoured by Sharks—Abundance of Water—
Coral Insects—Formation and Growth of Coral Rocks—Wonders
of Nature.

THEY went down to the beach. Ready first procured from the stores a good stout rope; and as the waves threw up casks and timbers of the vessel, they stopped them from being washed back again, and either rolled or hauled them up with the rope until they were safely landed. This occupied them for the major part of the day; and yet they had not collected a quarter of the articles that were in their reach, independent of the quantity which floated about out at sea and at the entrance of the cove.

"Well, sir," said Ready, "I think we have done a good day's

work; to-morrow we shall be able to do much more, for the sea you see is going down already, and the sun is showing himself from the corner of that cloud. Now we will go to supper, and then see if we can make ourselves more comfortable for the night."

The tent which had not been blown down was given to Mrs. Seagrave and the children, and the other was fitted up as well as it could be. The bedding being all wet, they procured some sails from the stores, which being stowed away farther in the grove, had not suffered much from the tempest; and, spreading the canvas, they lay down, and the night passed without any disaster, for the wind was now lulled to a pleasant breeze.

The next morning the sun shone bright—the air was fresh and bracing; but a slight breeze rippled the waters, and there was little or no surf. The various fragments of the wreck were tossed by the little surf that still remained; many things were lying on the beach which had landed during the night, and many more required but a little trouble to secure them. There appeared to be a sort of indraught into the cove, as all the articles which had been floating out to sea were now gradually coming on shore in that direction. Ready and Mr. Seagrave worked till breakfast-time, and had by that time saved a great many casks and packages.

After breakfast they went down again to the beach and resumed their labours. "Look, Ready, what it that?" said William, who was with them, as he pointed to a white-looking mass floating in the cove.

"That, sir, is the poor cow; and if you look again, you will see the sharks are around, making a feast of her: don't you see them?"

"Yes, I do—what a quantity!"

"Yes, there's no want of them, Master William; so be very careful how you get into the water, and never let Master Tommy go near it, for they don't care how shallow it is when they see their food. But now, sir," said Ready, "I must leave you and Master William to do what you can in saving any more of the wreck, while I set to and put the boat in proper repair; we shall want her directly, and the sooner she is in order the better."

As it would take some days for Ready to put the boat into proper order, Mr. Seagrave determined that he would go to the other side of the island with William, that he might examine it himself; and as Mrs. Seagrave had no objection to be left with Ready and Juno, on the third day after the gale they set off. William led the way, guiding his footsteps through the grove by the blazing of the cocoanut trees; and in two hours they reached their destination.

" Is not this beautiful, father? " said William.

" Yes, indeed it is, my dear boy," replied Mr. Seagrave. " I fancied that nothing could be more beautiful than the spot where we reside on the other side of the island, but this surpasses it, not only in variety, but in extent."

" And now let us examine the spring, father," said William, leading the way to the ravine.

The spring was full and flowing, and the water excellent. They then directed their steps towards the sandy beach, and having walked some time, sat down upon a coral rock.

" Who would have ever imagined, William," said Mr. Seagrave, " that this island, and so many more which abound in the Pacific Ocean, could have been raised by the work of little insects not bigger than a pin's head? "

" Insects, father? " replied William.

" Yes, insects. Give me that piece of dead coral, William. Do you see that on every branch there are a hundred little holes? Well, in every one of these little holes once lived a sea-insect."

" Yes, I understand that; but how do you make out that this island was made by them? that's what I want to know."

" Nevertheless it is true, William, that almost all the islands in these seas have been made by the labour and increase of these small animals. The coral grows at first at the bottom of the sea, where it is not disturbed by the winds or waves: by degrees, as it increases, it advances higher and higher to the surface, till at last it comes near the top of the water; then it is like those reefs which you see out there, William, and it is stopped very much in its growth by the force of the winds and waves, which break it off, and of course it never grows above the water, for if it did the animals would die."

" Then how does it become an island? "

" By very slow degrees; the time, perhaps, much depending upon chance; for instance, a log of wood floating about, and covered with barnacles, may ground upon the coral reefs; that would be a sufficient commencement, for it would remain above water, and then shelter the coral to leeward of it, until a flat rock had formed, level with the edge of the water. The sea-birds are always looking for a place to rest upon, and they would soon find it, and then their droppings would, in course of time, form a little patch above water, and other floating substances would be thrown on it; and land-birds who are blown out to sea might rest themselves on it, and the seeds from their stomachs, when dropped, would grow into trees or bushes."

"I understand that."

"Well then, William, you observe there is an island commenced, as it were, and, once commenced, it soon increases, for the coral would then be protected to leeward, and grow up fast. Do you observe how the coral reefs extend at this side of the island, where they are protected from the winds and waves; and how different it is on the weather side, which we have just left? Just so the little patch above water protects the corals to leeward, and there the island increases fast; for the birds not only settle on it, but they make their nests and rear their young, and so every year the soil increases; and then perhaps one cocoanut in its great outside shell (which appears as if it was made on purpose to be washed on shore in this way, for it is watertight and hard, and at the same time very light, so that it floats, and will remain for months in the water without being injured) at last is thrown on these little patches—it takes root, and becomes a tree, every year shedding its large branches, which are turned into mould as soon as they decay, and then dropping its nuts, which again take root and grow in this mould; and thus they continue, season after season, and year after year, until the islands becomes as large and as thickly covered with trees as the one we are now standing upon. Is not this wonderful, my dear boy? Is not He a great and good God who can make such minute animals as these work His pleasure, and at the time He thinks fit to produce such a beautiful island as this?"

"Indeed, indeed, He is," exclaimed William.

"We only need use our eyes, William, and we shall love as well as adore. Look at that shell—is it not beautifully marked?—could the best painter in the world equal its colouring?"

"No, indeed,—I should think not."

"And yet there are thousands of them in sight, and perhaps millions more in the water."

For a few minutes after this conversation, Mr. Seagrave and William were both silent. Mr. Seagrave then rose from where he was sitting: "Come, William, let us now find our way back again; we have three hours' daylight left, and shall be home in good time."

"Yes, in time for supper, father," replied William; "and I feel that I shall do justice to it; so the sooner we are off the better."

CHAPTER XX

Preparations for Removing—A Trip in the Boat—Visit to the Spring—
Mrs. Seagrave's Anticipations.

EVERYTHING was now preparing for their removal to the leeward side of the island. Ready had nearly completed the boat; he had given it a thorough repair, and fitted a mast and sail. William and Mr. Seagrave continued to collect and secure the various articles thrown on shore, particularly such as would be injured by their exposure to the weather. Neither was Mrs. Seagrave, who was now getting quite strong, nor Juno, idle. They had made up everything that they could in packages, ready for moving to the other side of the island. On the eighth day after the gale they were ready, and a consultation was held. It was arranged that Ready should put into the boat the bedding and canvas of one tent, and should take William with him on his expedition. Having transported this safe, he should return for a load of the most necessary articles, and then the family should walk through the grove to the other side of the island, and remain there with Mr. Seagrave while Ready and William returned for the other tent; and after that, the boat should make as many trips as the weather would permit, till they had brought all the things absolutely required. It was a lovely calm morning when Ready and William pushed off in the boat, which was well loaded; and as soon as they were clear of the cove, they hoisted the sail, and went away before the wind along the coast. In two hours they had run to the eastern end of the island, and hauled up close in shore.

"How many miles do you think it is from the cove to this part of the island?" William asked.

"About six or seven, not more: the island, you see, is long and narrow. Now let us get the things out and carry them up, and then we will be back to the cove long before dark. I shall be glad to be back, for your mamma was not very easy in her mind at your going to sea again, Master William—I saw that."

The boat was soon unloaded, but they had some way to carry up the things. "We shall not mind such a gale as we had the other day when our tents are pitched here, William," said Ready "for we shall be protected by the whole width of the cocoanut grove. We shall hardly feel the wind, although we shall the rain, for that will come down in torrents."

"I must go and see how our spring gets on," said William, "and get a drink from it."

"Do so; and then you can follow me down to the boat."

Willy reported the spring to be up to the brim with water, and that he had never drunk any water so excellent in his life. They then pushed off the boat, and, after rowing for about two hours or more, found themselves at the entrance of the cove, and Mrs. Seagrave, with Tommy by her side, waving her handkerchief to them.

They very soon pulled into the beach, and, landing, received the congratulations of the whole party at their first successful voyage, and all expressed their delight at its having proved so much shorter than had been anticipated.

"You must be almost tired of eating nothing but salt meat and biscuit, ma'am," said Ready, as they sat down to their meal; "but when we are all safe on the other side of the island, we hope to feed you better."

"As long as the children are well, I care very little about it."

CHAPTER XXI

Arrival of William and Juno—Anticipations of the Future—Proposal to build a House, and make a Garden and Pond—Ready's Age and Habits—Arrangements for Cooking—Ready finds a Turtle.

OLD Ready had his boat loaded and had made sail for the other side of the island long before the family were up; indeed, before they were dressed he had landed his whole cargo on the beach, and was sitting down quietly taking his breakfast. As soon as he had eaten the beef and biscuit which he had taken with him, he carried up the things which he had brought, and commenced arrangements for setting up the tent, intending to await the arrival of William and Juno, that they might assist him in getting up the spars and canvas over it.

About ten o'clock William made his appearance, leading one of the goats by a string, followed by the others. Juno came after with the sheep, also holding one with a cord; the rest had very quietly joined the procession. "Here we are at last!" said William, laughing: "we have had terrible work in the woods, for Nanny would run on one side of a tree when I went on the other, and then I had to let go the string. We fell in with the pigs again, and Juno gave such a squall!"

"I tink 'em wild beast," said Juno. "Ah! what a nice place! Missus will like to live here."

"Yes, it is a very nice place, Juno; and you'll be able to wash here, and never mind about saving the water."

"I am thinking," said William, "how we are to get the fowls over here; they are not very wild, but still we cannot catch them."

"I'll bring them with me to-morrow, Master William."

"But how will you catch them?"

"Wait till they are gone to roost and then you may catch them when you please."

"And I suppose the pigeons and the pigs must run wild?"

"The best thing we can do with them, sir; the pigs will always feed themselves among the cocoanut trees, and will breed very fast."

"Then we shall have to shoot them, I suppose?"

"Well, Master William, so we shall; and the pigeons also, when they have become plentiful, if we remain here so long; so we shall have some game on the island. We shall soon be well stocked and live in plenty. Every year, if it please God, we shall be richer; but now you must help me to get the tent up and everything in order, so that your mamma may find everything comfortable on her arrival, for she will be very tired, I daresay, walking through the wood. It is a long way for her."

"Mamma is much better than she was," replied William. "I think she will soon be quite strong again, especially when she comes to live at this beautiful place."

"We have a great deal of work to do, more than we can get through before the rainy season, which is a pity, but it can't be helped; by this time next year we shall be more comfortable."

"Why, what have we to do besides putting up the tents and shifting over here?"

"In the first place we have to build a house, and that will take a long while; we must contrive how we can till it is finished. Then we ought to make a little garden, and sow the seeds which your father brought from England with him."

"Oh, that will be a nice thing; where shall we make it, Ready?"

"I have looked out for that: we must put a fence across that point of land, and dig up all the brushwood; the mould is very good."

"Then what next?"

"Then we shall want a storehouse for all the things we have got, and all that are in the wood and on the beach: we must leave them there till we have time to examine them, and then consider

how many trips we shall have to make with the little boat to bring them all round."

"Yes, that is very true, Ready. Have we anything more to do?"

"Plenty; we have to build a turtle-pond and a fish-pond, and bathing-place for Juno to wash the children in."

"Yes, and myself too," said Juno.

"Well, I daresay a little washing won't hurt you, Juno, although you are a clean girl."

"Well, let us once get mamma and the children here, and we will work hard."

"I should wish very much to see it all done, Master William," said Ready. "I hope my life will be spared till it is done, at all events. I should like to leave you all comfortable and able to get on without me."

"But why do you say that, Ready? you are an old man, but you are strong and healthy."

"I am so now; but, Master William, what does the Book say? —'In the midst of life we are in death.' Can I then, an old man, worn out with hardships, expect to live long? No—no, Master William; in an old man it is madness and wickedness. Still, I should like to remain here as long as I can be useful, and then I trust I may depart in peace. I never wish to leave this island, Master William; and I have a kind of feeling that my bones will remain on it. God's will be done!"

For some time after Ready had finished, neither of them said a word, but continued their employment, stretching out the canvas of the tent and fastening it down to the ground with pegs. At last William broke the silence.

"Ready, did you not say your Christian name was Masterman?"

"So it is, Master William."

"It is a very odd Christian name! You were called after some other person?"

"Yes, I was, Master William; he was a very rich man."

"Do you know, Ready, I should like very much if you will one day tell me your history—I mean your whole life, from the time you were a boy."

"Well, perhaps I may, Master William; for there are many parts of my life which would prove a lesson to others; but that must be after we have got through our work—not yet awhile."

"How old are you, Ready?"

"I am sixty-four, Master William; that is a very old age for a seaman."

" But why do you say ' old for a seaman ' ? "

" Because sailors live faster than other people, partly from the hardships which they undergo, and partly from their own fault in drinking so much spirits; and then they are too often reckless, and care nothing for their healths, and so their constitutions are broken up and destroyed sooner than those of people on shore."

" But you never drink spirits now? "

" No, never, Master William, but in my early days I was as foolish as others. Now, Juno, we are all ready for you, and you may bring in the bedding. We have two or three hours yet, Master William; what shall we do next? "

" Had we not better make the fireplace all ready for cooking? Juno and I can bring the stones."

" You are a thoughtful boy—it was what I was going to propose, if you had not. I shall be here to-morrow long before any of you, and I will take care that you have supper ready upon your arrival."

" I brought a bottle of water in my knapsack," replied William, " not so much for the wafer, as because I want to milk the goats and take back the milk for baby."

" Then you proved yourself not only thoughtful but kind, Master William: now while you and Juno fetch the stones, I will stow away under the trees all the things which I have brought down in the boat."

In an hour the fireplace was made, Ready had done all that he could, the goats were milked and let loose, and then William and Juno set off through the wood on their journey back.

Ready went down to the beach. On his arrival there, he observed a small turtle; creeping up softly he got between it and the water, and succeeded in turning it over. " That will do for to-morrow," said he, as he stepped into the boat; and, laying hold of the oars, he pulled out of the bay to return to the cove.

CHAPTER XXII

The Tents taken down—Departure for the new Residence—Arrival of the Seagraves—Ready's Congratulations—Plans for the Future—Dine off Turtle-soup—Gratitude to God.

THE arrangements for the next day were made as soon as Ready joined the others. They then separated for the night, but Ready and William remained until it was dark to catch the fowls and tie

their legs, ready for their being put in the boat the next morning. At daylight they all were summoned to dress themselves as soon as possible. All was bustle and confusion; and as soon as Mrs. Seagrave was dressed, her tent was taken down, and with all the bedding put into the boat. As soon as they had breakfasted, the plates, knives, and forks, and some other necessaries, were also put in; Ready laid the fowls on top of all, and set off by himself for their new location.

After he was gone, the rest of the party prepared for their journey through the cocoanut grove. William led the way, with the three dogs close to his heels, Mr. Seagrave with the baby in his arms, Juno with little Caroline, and Mrs. Seagrave with Master Tommy holding her hand, and, as he said, taking care of his mamma. They bade adieu with regret to the spot which had first received them after their dangers; looked round once more at the cove, and the fragments of the wreck and cargo, strewed about in every direction; and then turned into the wood. Ready arrived at the point, and was going on shore in less than two hours after he had set off. As soon as the boat was safe in, he did not wait to land his cargo, but going up to the turtle which he had turned the day before, he killed it, and cleaned it on the beach. He then went to where he had built up the fireplace with stones, made a fire, filled the iron saucepan full of water, and set it on to boil; he then cut up a portion of the turtle, and put it into the pot, with some slices of salt pork, covered it up and left it to boil; and having hung up the rest of the turtle in the shade, he went back to the beach to unload the boat. He released the poor fowls, who were very stiff from being so long tied by the legs, but by degrees they recovered themselves, and were very busy seeking for food.

"It's almost time that they should have arrived," thought Ready; "they must have started nearly four hours ago; may be not so soon—it's no easy matter to get a convoy of women and children under weigh." Ready remained a quarter of an hour more, watching the fire, and occasionally skimming the top of the pot, when the three dogs came bounding towards him.

"Well, they are not far off now," observed old Ready.

This was true; in six or seven minutes afterwards the party made their appearance, very hot and very fatigued.

"I think," said Mr. Seagrave, who had given the baby to Juno, "that this little journey of to-day has been a pretty good proof of how helpless we should have been without you, Ready."

"I am glad that you are here, sir," replied Ready, "it is a weight

off my mind; now you will get on better. I think that after a while you may live very comfortably here; but still we have much to do. As soon as Madam has rested, we will have our dinner and then fix up our own tent, which will be quite enough after such a hard day's work. To-morrow we will begin in good earnest."

"Do you go back to the cove to-morrow, Ready?"

"Yes sir, we want our stores here; I must bring some beef and pork, flour and peas, besides many other things which we cannot do without; it will take about three trips to empty our storehouses; and as to the other things, we can examine them and bring them down at our leisure—they will remain there a long time without taking any harm. As soon as I have made those three trips in the boat, we can then work here altogether."

"But I can do something in the meantime."

"Oh yes, there is plenty for you to do."

"Shall you take William with you?"

"No, sir; he will be more useful here, and I can do without him."

Mr. Seagrave went into the tent and found his wife much refreshed; but the children had all fallen fast asleep on the beds. They waited another half-hour, and then woke Tommy and Caroline, that they might all sit down to dinner.

"Dear me," exclaimed William, as Ready took the cover off the saucepan, "what is it that you have got good there?"

"It's a treat I have prepared for you all," replied Ready. "I know that you are tired of salt meat, so now you are going to feed like aldermen."

"Why, what is it, Ready?" said Mrs. Seagrave; "it smells very good."

"It is turtle-soup, ma'am; and I hope you will like it; for if you do, you may often have it, now that you are on this side of the island."

"Indeed, it really is excellent; but it wants a little salt. Have you any salt, Juno?"

"Got a little, ma'am. Very little left," replied Juno.

"What shall we do when all our salt is gone?" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Juno must get some more," replied Ready.

"How I get salt?—hab none left," replied Juno, looking at Ready.

"There's plenty out there, Juno," said Mr. Seagrave, pointing to the sea.

"I don't know where," said Juno.

"What do you mean, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Seagrave.

"I only mean, if we want salt we can have as much as we please by boiling down salt water in the kettle, or else making a salt pan in the rocks, and obtaining it by the sun drying up the water and leaving the salt."

The soup was pronounced excellent by everybody. Tommy asked to be helped so often, that his mother would not give him any more. As soon as they had finished, Mrs. Seagrave remained with the children; and Ready and Mr. Seagrave, assisted by Juno and William, got the second tent up, and everything ready for the night. By the time they had finished it was nearly dark. They all assembled, and returned thanks to God for their having gained their new abode; and, tired out with the fatigue of the day, were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

Sinking a Well—Preparations for Dinner—Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave rejoice—
Making the Well—Sinking the Cask.

MR. SEAGRAVE was the first up on the ensuing morning; and when Ready came out of the tent, he said to him, "Do you know Ready, I feel myself much happier and my mind much more at ease since I find myself here, than I did before. On the other side of the island everything reminded me that we had been shipwrecked; and I could not help thinking of home and my own country; but here we appear as if we had come here by choice."

"I trust that feeling will be stronger every day, sir."

"What is the first thing which you wish we should set about?"

"I think sir, the first object is to have a good supply of fresh water; and I therefore wish you and Master William—(here he is. Good-morning, Master William)—I was saying that I thought it better that Mr. Seagrave and you should clear out the spring while I am away in the boat. You observe, Mr. Seagrave, we must follow up the spring till we get among the cocoanut trees, where it will be shaded from the sun, then, if you will dig out a hole large enough to sink down in the earth one of the water-casks which lie on the beach, I will bring it down with me this afternoon; and then when it is fixed in the earth in that way, we shall always have the cask full of water for use, and the spring filling it as fast as we can empty it."

"I understand you perfectly," replied Mr. Seagrave; "that shall be our task to-day while you are absent."

Mr. Seagrave and William worked hard; and by twelve o'clock the hole was quite large and deep enough, according to the directions Ready had given. They then left their work, and went to the tent, where they found Mrs. Seagrave mending the children's clothes.

"You don't know how much happier I am now that I am here," said Mrs. Seagrave, taking her husband's hand, as he seated himself by her.

"I trust it is a presentiment of future happiness, my dear," said Mr. Seagrave. "I assure you that I feel the same, and was saying so to Ready this morning."

"I feel that I could live here for ever, it is so calm and beautiful."

"There is Ready, coming round the point," exclaimed William. "How fast that little boat sails! It is a long pull though for the old man when he goes to the cove. Juno, is dinner ready?"

"Yes, Massa William, very soon now."

The turtle-steaks were as much approved of as the turtle-soup; indeed, after having been so long on salt meat, a return to fresh provisions was delightful.

"And now to finish our well," said William, as soon as dinner was over.

"How hard you do work, William," said his mother.

"So I ought, mother. I must learn to do everything now."

"And that you will very soon," said Ready.

CHAPTER XXIV

Plan of Operations—Trees to be cut down—Spot for a Turtle-pond and a Garden—Juno and William at work.

THE next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Seagrave observed—

"Now that we have so many things to do, I think, Ready, we ought to lay down a plan of operations; method is everything when work is to be done: now tell me what you propose shall be our several occupations for the next week, for to-morrow is Sunday; and although we have not yet been able, since we have been cast on shore, to honour the day as we should, I think that now we must and ought to keep it holy."

"Yes, sir," replied Ready; "and I would have proposed it if you had not. To-morrow we will rest from our labour, and ask God's blessing upon our endeavours during the six days of the week; and now, as to your proposition, Mr. Seagrave,—shall we begin first with the lady?"

"You must not consider that you have ladies with you now, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave,—"at least, not fine ladies. My health and strength are recovering fast, and I mean to be very useful. I propose to assist Juno in all the domestic duties, such as the cookery and washing, to look after and teach the children, mend all the clothes, and make all that is required; to the best of my ability: if I can do more I will, and, at all events, you shall often have Juno's services during the best part, if not the whole, of the day."

"I think we may be satisfied with that, Mr. Seagrave," replied Ready. "Now, sir, the two most pressing points, with the exception of building the house, are to dig up a piece of ground, and plant our potatoes and seeds; and to make a turtle pond, so as to catch the turtle and put them in before the season is over."

"You are right," replied Mr. Seagrave: "but which ought to be done first?"

"I should say the turtle-pond, as it will be only a few days' work for you, Juno, and Master William."

Mr. Seagrave and Ready then walked down to the beach, and, after surveying the reefs for some time, Ready said, "You see, Mr. Seagrave, we do not want too much water for a turtle-pond, as, if it is too deep, there is a difficulty in catching them when we want them: what we want is a space of water surrounded by a low wall of stones, so that the animals cannot escape, for they cannot climb up, although they can walk on the shelving sand with their flippers. Now, sir, the reef here is high out of the water, and the space within the reef and the beach is deep enough, and the rocks on the beach nearly fill up that side and prevent them crawling away by the shore. We have, therefore, little more to do than to fill up the two other sides, and then our pond will be complete. Now, sir, suppose we make a signal for Master William and Juno, and set them to work. They may do something before dinner." Mr. Seagrave called, and waved his hat, and Juno and William came down to them. Ready explained to William what was to be done. Having stayed with them and assisted them for some time, Mr. Seagrave and Ready proceeded to the point, to fix upon a spot for a garden, leaving William and Juno to continue their labour.

CHAPTER XXV

Ready's Plans as to the future Garden—Tommy very naughty—He makes himself ill—Tommy eats Castor-oil beans.

MR. SEAGRAVE and Ready then continued their way along the beach, until they arrived at the point which the latter had considered as a convenient place to make the garden. They found a sufficiency of mould, although not very deep; and as the point was narrow at its joining on to the mainland, no great length of enclosure would be required.

" You see, sir," said Ready, " we can wait till after the rainy season is over before we put up the fence, and we can prepare it in the meantime, when the weather will permit us to work. The seeds and potatoes will not come up until after the rains are finished; so all we have to do is to dig up the ground, and put them in as fast as we can. We must clear away this brushwood, which will not be difficult where the soil is so light, and sow a portion of our seeds, for we cannot make a large garden this year; but our potatoes we must contrive to get in, if we cannot manage anything else."

" If we have no fence to make," replied Mr. Seagrave, " I think we shall be able to clear away quite enough ground in a week to put in all that we require."

" We had better now go on to the grove, and choose the spot for cutting down the trees, which we shall need for building the house."

Ready and Mr. Seagrave proceeded in the direction which the former had pointed out, until they arrived at a spot on a rising ground, where the trees were so thick that it was not very easy to pass through them.

" There is the place, sir," said Ready. " I propose to cut all the timber we want for the houses out of this part of the grove, and to leave an open square place, in the centre of which we will build our storerooms. You see, sir, if necessary,—although, certainly, there is no appearance of its being likely at present—with a very little trouble we might turn it into a place of protection and defence, as a few palisades here and there between the trees would make it, what they call in the East Indies, a stockade."

" Very true, my good fellow; but I trust we shall not require it for such a purpose."

" I hope so too, sir; but there is nothing like being prepared: however, we have plenty to do before we can think of doing that. Now, sir, as dinner is ready, suppose we return, and after dinner we will both commence our tasks. I like a beginning, if it be ever so small."

Juno and William returned to the dinner which Mrs. Seagrave had prepared. They were both very warm with their work, which was very hard, but very eager to finish their task. Master Tommy had been very troublesome during the whole of the morning: he had not learnt his lesson, and had put a cinder into Caroline's hand and burnt her. After dinner, Mrs. Seagrave requested her husband, as he was about to go down to the point, with the spade and a small hatchet in his hand, to take Tommy with him, as she had a great deal to do, and could not watch him as well as the baby and Caroline. So Mr. Seagrave took Master Tommy by the hand, and led him to the point, and made him sit down close to him while he cleared away the brushwood.

Mr. Seagrave worked very hard, and when he had cut down and cleared a portion of the ground, he made Tommy carry away to a little distance, and pile in a heap, the bushes which he had cleared away. When Mr. Seagrave had cleared away a large piece of ground with his hatchet, he then took his spade to dig at the roots and turn up the mould, leaving Tommy to amuse himself. What Tommy did for about an hour, during which Mr. Seagrave worked very diligently, his father did not observe; but all of a sudden he began to cry; and when his father asked him the reason, he did not answer, but only cried the more until at last he put his hands to his stomach, and roared most lustily. As he appeared to be in very great pain, his father left off work, and led him up to the tent, when Mrs. Seagrave came out, alarmed at his cries. He would, however, do nothing but roar, refusing to answer any questions, and his father and mother could not imagine what was the matter with him. Old Ready, who had heard Master Tommy screaming for so long a while, thought that there might be something serious, and left his work to ascertain the cause. When he heard what had passed he said—

" Depend upon it, sir, the child has eaten something which has made him ill. Tell me, Tommy, what did you eat when you were down there? "

" Berries," roared Tommy.

" I thought as much, ma'am," said Ready. " I must go and see what the berries were." And the old man hastened down to the place where Mr. Seagrave had been at work. In the mean-

time Mrs. Seagrave was very much alarmed lest the child should have poisoned himself, and Mr. Seagrave went to search among the medicines for some castor-oil.

Ready returned just as Mr. Seagrave came back to the tent with the bottle of castor-oil, and he told Ready that he was about to give Tommy a dose.

"Well, sir," replied Ready, who had a plant in his hand, "I don't think you should give him any, for it appears to me that he has taken too much already. See, sir, this is, if I recollect right,—and I'm almost sure that I am right,—the castor-oil plant, and here are some of the castor-oil beans, which Master Tommy has been eating. Tell me, Tommy, did you eat them?"

"Yes," cried Tommy, putting both hands to his stomach.

"I thought so: give him a little warm drink, ma'am, and he'll soon be better: there's no great harm done: and it will teach him not to eat berries or beans again."

What Ready said was true; nevertheless Master Tommy was very ill for the whole of the day, and was put into bed very early.

CHAPTER XXVI

Turning a Turtle—On fishing—Pond finished.

"Now, Master William," said Ready, "if you are not very sleepy, perhaps you would like to come with me to-night, and see if we cannot turn some of the turtle; for the season is going away fast, and they will leave the island very soon."

"Yes, I should like it very much."

"Well, then, we must wait till it is dark: there will not be much moon to-night, and that is all the better."

As soon as the sun had disappeared, William and Ready went down to the beach, and sat quietly on a rock. In a short time Ready perceived a turtle crawling on the sand, and, desiring William to follow him without speaking, walked softly down by the water's edge, so as to get between the animal and the sea.

As soon as the turtle perceived them it made for the water, but they met it; and Ready, seizing hold of one of its fore-flippers, turned it over on its back.

"You see, Master William, that is the way to turn a turtle: take care that he does not catch you with his mouth, for, if he did, he would bite the piece out: recollect that. Now the animal

cannot get away, for he can't turn over again, and we shall find him here to-morrow morning: so we will now walk along the beach, and see if we cannot find some more."

Ready and William remained till past midnight, during which they turned sixteen turtles, large and small.

"I think that will do, Master William, for once: we have made a good night's work of it, for we have provided food for many days. We must, however, try again in three or four days if we cannot add to our stock. To-morrow we must put them all into the pond."

"Why don't we catch some fish, Ready? We might put them into the turtle-pond."

"They would not stay there long, Master William, nor could we easily get them out if they did. We must make a pond on purpose for fish by and by: we have had no time, for other things have pressed upon us of more consequence. I have often thought of getting some lines ready, and yet the time has never come, for I feel sleepy after our day's work; but as soon as the house is built, we will have them, and you shall be fisherman in chief, after I have once shown you how."

"But the fish will bite at night, will they not?"

"Oh yes; and better than they do in the daytime."

"Well, then, if you will get me a line and show me how, I will fish for an hour or so after the work is done; for Tommy is always asking for fried fish; and I know mamma is getting very tired of salt meat, and does not think it good for Caroline. She was very glad when you brought the cocoanuts the day before yesterday."

"Well, then, I will get a bit of candle to-morrow night, and fit up two fishing lines. But I must go with you, Master William. We don't use much candle, at all events.

"No, we are too glad to go to bed; but there are two or three boxes of one sort and another up in the cove. What shall we do when they are all gone?"

"We shall have to use the cocoanut oil, and we shall never want for that. Good-night, Master William."

The next morning before breakfast all hands were employed in getting the turtle into the pond. After breakfast, it was agreed that William, Ready, and Mr. Seagrave should all go down to the garden, and put in the potatoes.

CHAPTER XXVII

Preparing for Fishing—Fishing—Fortunate Escape—Ready reproves William—William's Fish—Felling Cocoanut Trees.

THAT night Ready sat up for two or three hours working by candlelight (William keeping him company), very busily engaged fitting up the fishing-lines with leads and hooks. At last two were complete.

"What bait must we use, Ready?"

"I should think that the best would be one of the fish out of the shells which are in the sand; but a piece of pork fat will, I daresay, do as well."

"And whereabouts would you fish, Ready?"

"The best place, I should think, would be at the farthermost end of the point, where I got the boat through the reef—the water is deep there close to the rocks."

"I was thinking, Ready, if those gannets and men-of-war birds would be good eating."

"Not very, Master William; they are very tough and very fishy; we must try for those when we can get nothing better. Now that we have got in the seeds and potatoes, we must all set to to-morrow morning to fell and carry the timber. I think Mr. Seagrave had better use the axe with me; and you and Juno can wheel it out to the place where we have decided upon building the house. And now we had better go to bed."

William, however, had made up his mind to do otherwise; he knew that his mother would be very glad to have some fish, and determined, as the moon shone bright, to try if he could not catch some before he went to bed; so he waited very quietly till he thought Ready was asleep, as well as the others, and then went out with the lines, and went down to the beach, where he picked up three or four shells, and, breaking them between two pieces of rock, took out the fish and baited his hooks. He then walked to the point. It was a beautiful night; the water was very smooth, and the moonbeams pierced deep below the surface. William threw in his line, and as soon as the lead touched the bottom he pulled it up about a foot, as Ready had instructed him; and he had not held his line more than half a minute, when it was jerked so forcibly, that, not expecting it, he was nearly hauled into the water; as it was, the fish was so strong that the line slipped through

his hand and scored his fingers; but after a time he was able to pull it in, and he landed on the beach a large silver-scaled fish, weighing nine or ten pounds. As soon as he dragged it so far away from the edge of the rocks as to prevent its flapping into the water again, William took out the hook and determined to try for another. His line was down as short a time as before, when it was again jerked with violence; but William was this time prepared, and he let out the line and played the fish till it was tired, and then pulled it up, and found that the second fish was even larger than the first. Satisfied with his success, he wound up his lines, and running a piece of string through the gills of the fish, dragged them back to the tents, and hanged them to the pole, for fear of the dogs eating them; he then went in, and was soon fast asleep. The next morning William was the first up, and showed his prizes with much glee; but Ready was very much displeased with him.

" You did very wrong, Master William, to run the risk which you did. If you were resolved to catch fish, why did you not tell me, and I would have gone with you? You say, yourself, that the fish nearly hauled you into the water: suppose it had done so, or suppose a small shark instead of one of these gropers (as we call them) had taken the bait, you must have been jerked in; and the rocks are so steep there, that you would not have been able to get out again before a shark had hold of you. Think a moment, Master William, of what would have been the distress of your father and of me (for I love you dearly); think what would have been the agony and despair of your poor mother, when this news should have arrived, and you not to be found, and never would have been seen again."

" I was very wrong, Ready," replied William, " now that I think of it; but I wanted to surprise and please my mother."

" That reason is almost sufficient to plead your pardon, my dear boy," replied Ready; " but don't do so again. Recollect, I am always willing and anxious to go with you wherever you wish. And now let us say no more about it; nobody will know that you have been in danger, and there's no harm done; and you mustn't mind an old man scolding you a little."

" No, indeed, Ready, I do not, for I was very thoughtless; but I had no idea that there was danger."

" There's your mother coming out of her tent," replied Ready. " Good-morning, madam. Do you know what William has done for you last night? Look, madam, here are two beautiful fish, and very excellent eating they are, I can tell you."

"I am quite delighted!" replied Mrs. Seagrave. "Tommy, come here. Don't you want some fried fish?"

"Yes," replied Tommy.

"Then look up at the pole of the tent."

Tommy clapped his hands and danced about, crying, "Fried fish for dinner"; and Juno said, "Have very fine dinner to-day, Missy Caroline."

After breakfast they all set out for the grove, where Ready had been cutting down the trees, taking with them the wheels and axle, and a couple of stout ropes. Mr. Seagrave and Ready cut down the trees and slung them to the axle, and Juno and William dragged them to the spot where the house was to be built.

They were not sorry when dinner was ready, for it was very hard work; and Tommy was so ravenous, although he had done nothing, that at last they were obliged to prevent his eating any more.

That night, tired as they were, Ready and William went out and turned eight more turtles. They continued felling the cocoanut trees and dragging the timber for the remainder of the week, when they considered that they had nearly enough to commence building. Sunday was passed in devotion and quiet. On the Monday night they turned nine more turtles, and caught three large fish; and on the Tuesday morning they commenced building a house.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Building a House—House finished—Rain sets in—Gratitude to God for all His Mercies.

READY had cut out and prepared the door-posts and window-frames from the timber which he had towed round from the cove. He now fixed four poles in the earth, upright at each corner, and then, with the assistance of Mr. Seagrave, notched every log of cocoanut wood on both sides, where it was to meet with the one crossing it, so that, by laying log upon log alternately, they fitted pretty close, and had only to have the chinks between them filled in with cocoanut leaves twisted very tight and forced between them: this latter was the work of William and Juno when no more logs were ready for carrying; and, by degrees, the house rose up from its foundation. The fireplace could not be made at once, as they had either to find clay, or to burn shells

into lime and build it up with rocks and mortar; but a space was left for it. For three weeks they worked very hard: as soon as the sides were up, they got on the whole of the roof and rafters; and then, with the broad leaves of the cocoanut trees which had been cut down, Ready thatched it very strong and securely, keeping the thatch down with the weight of heavy poles slung over the top of the roof with stout ropes. At the end of the three weeks the house was secure from the weather; and it was quite time, for the weather had begun to change, the clouds now gathered thick, and the rainy season was commencing. They had a very violent shower one day, and then the weather cleared again.

The earth in the inside of the house was then beaten down hard, so as to make a floor; and a sort of bedstead, about two feet from the ground, running the whole length of the house, was raised on each side of the interior; these were fitted with canvas screens to let down by night. And then Ready and William took the last trip in the boat to fetch down the chairs and tables, which they did just before the coming on of the first storm of the season. The bedding and all the utensils were now taken into the house; and a little outhouse was built up to cook in, until the fireplace could be made.

It was late on the Saturday night that the family were shifted into the new house; and fortunate it was that they had no further occasion for delay, for on the Sunday morning the first storm burst upon them; the wind blew with great force; and, although they were shielded from it, still the cocoanut trees ground and sawed each other's stems, as they bent their heads to its force. The lightning was vivid, and the thunder appalling, while the rain descended in such a continual torrent that it appeared as if another deluge was at hand. The animals left the pastures, and sheltered themselves in the grove; the dogs crouched under the bedplaces; and although noonday, it was so dark that they could not see to read.

"This, then, is the rainy season which you talked about, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave. "Is it always like this? If so, what shall we do?"

"No, madam; the sun will shine sometimes, but not for a long while at a time. We shall be able to get out and do something every now and then almost every day, but still we shall have rain, perhaps for many days without intermission, and we must work indoors; I daresay we shall find plenty to do."

"How thankful we ought to be that we have a house over our heads; why, we should have been drowned in the tents!"

CHAPTER XXIX

Juno and Ready—Going the Rounds—The Boat drifted—Sheep and Goats—Council held—Discipline—Boat to be secured—Arrangements—Go to work.

AT the end of the last chapter we left off where our party on the island had taken possession of their new house, at the commencement of the rainy season. It was on Saturday, and a storm had come on, which had continued during the whole night; for the storms are very violent in the tropical countries, when the rainy season (which is equivalent to our winter) first makes its appearance. When, however, they all rose up the next morning, the clouds had cleared off, and the sun was shining bright. Ready and Juno were the first out of the house—Ready with the telescope under his arm, which he always took with him when he went his rounds, as he termed it, in the morning.

"Well, Juno," said Ready, "this is a fine morning after the rain."

"Yes, Massa Ready, very fine morning; but how I get fire light, and make kittle boil for breakfast, I really don't know—stick and cocoanut trash all so wet."

"Before I went to bed last night, Juno, I covered up the embers with ashes, put some stones over them, and then some cocoanut branches, so I think you will find some fire there yet. You see, Juno, we must do our best; we can't do everything at once; but next year, if we live and do well, I daresay we shall have a stack of dry fuel, and well thatched, all ready for the rainy season. I was going my morning's round, but I will stay a little and help you."

"Tank you, Massa Ready; plenty rain fall last night,"

"Yes, not a little, Juno; you must not expect to find the water at the well very clear this morning; indeed, I doubt if you will see the well at all. Here's some stuff which is not very wet."

"I got plenty of fire, too," replied Juno, who had removed the branches and stones, and was now on her knees, blowing up the embers.

"You'll do very well now, Juno," said Ready; "besides, Master William will be out directly—so I'll leave you."

Ready whistled to the dogs, who came bounding out, and then set off on his round of inspection. He first directed his steps to the well in the ravine; but, instead of the gushing spring and

the limpid clear water with which the cask sunk for a well had been filled, there was now a muddy torrent, rushing down the ravine, and the well was covered with it, and not to be distinguished.

"I thought as much," said Ready, musing over the impetuous stream; "well, better too much water than too little." Ready waded through, as he wished to examine the turtle-pond, which was on the other side of the stream. Finding all right, he again crossed the water, where it was now spread wide over the sandy beach, until he came to the other point, where he had moored his boat, both by the head and stern, with a rope, and a heavy stone made fast to it, as an anchor.

The gale, having blown off shore, the boat had dragged her moorings, and was so far out that Ready could not get at her.

"Here's a puzzle," said the old man; "how foolish of me not to have made a line fast to the shore. I'll not trust myself to John Shark by swimming to the boat."

"Let me see," Ready took the halyards and sheets belonging to the boat's sails, which he had left on the beach, and bent one on the other until he had sufficient length of rope. He then made a piece of wood, about two feet long, fast by the middle to the end of the rope, and, after one or two attempts, contrived to throw it into the boat. The piece of wood caught under one of the thwarts, and this enabled him to draw the boat to the shore.

Having baled out the water which had fallen into her during the storm, he then landed again and examined the garden.

"Now to find the sheep and goats," said Ready, "and then my morning's walk is over. Now, Romulus, now, Remus, boys, find them out," continued he; and the dogs, who appeared to know what he was in search of, went away in pursuit, and soon found the sheep and two of the goats, but the third goat was not with them.

"Why, where can Black Nanny be?" muttered old Ready, stopping a little while; at last he heard a bleat, in a small copse of brushwood, to which he directed his steps, followed by the dogs. "I thought as much," said the old man, as he perceived Nanny lying down in the copse with two newborn kids at her side. Ready walked back to the house, and brought in the kids, followed by Nanny. He found Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave and the children all dressed. Caroline and Tommy gave a scream of delight when they saw the little kids, and even little Albert clapped his hands. As soon as Ready put them down on the ground, Tommy and Caroline had each of them their arms round one.

As soon as the children could be persuaded to part with the kids, Nanny was tied up in a corner, and was very content with fondling and nursing her progeny. Juno and William brought in the breakfast, and as soon as it was over, Mr. Seagrave said, "Now, Ready, I think we must hold a council, and make arrangements as to our allotted duties and employments during the rainy season. We have a great deal to do, and must not be idle."

"Yes, sir, we have a great deal to do, and, to get through our work, we must have order and method in our doings. I've lived long enough to know how much can be done by regularity and discipline."

"I agree with you, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave; "method is everything. While one careless little girl is looking for her thimble, another will have finished her work, and I promise you that, inside of the house, as soon as we have the shelves and nails put up, everything shall be in its place, and there shall be a place for everything."

"What do you think we ought to do first, Ready?"

"Well, sir, our first job will be to haul up the boat and secure her from harm; we will half-dock her in the sand, and cover her over; for I do not think it will be safe to go in her now to the other side of the island, where the sea will always be rough; indeed the weather will be too uncertain to calculate upon even two or three hours of smooth water."

"There I perfectly agree with you. Now what is the next?"

"Why, sir, we must not leave the tents where they are, but take them down, and as soon as they are dry, stow them away, for we may want them by-and-by; then, sir, we must build a large outhouse for our stores and provisions, with a thatched roof, and a floor raised about four feet from the ground; and then, under the floor, the sheep and goats will have a protection from the weather. We can easily run that up; we must cover in three sides, and that we can do with cocoanut boughs in a very short time. Then, sir, there is the fish-pond to make, and also a salt-pan to cut out of the rock; but those we must do when we have no other work. Then we have two more long jobs. One is to go through the woods and examine the stores we have left on the other side of the island, and sort and arrange them, all ready for bringing here after the rains are over; and we must also explore the island a little, and find out what it produces; for you see, sir, at present we know nothing of it: we may find a great many things useful to us, a great many trees and fruits, and I hope and trust we may be able to find some more grass for our live stock;

for you see, sir, if it is to increase so as to be useful to us, we shall not have food for them here; especially if we want more land for our seeds, which we probably shall."

"I agree with you in all you say, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave; "now how shall we divide our strength?"

"We will not divide at present, sir, if you please. Juno has plenty to do indoors with Mrs. Seagrave; Master William, and you, and I, will first secure the boat and stow away the tents and gear; after that, we will set about the outbuilding, and work at it when we can. If Juno has any time to spare, she had better collect the cocoanut leaves, and pile them up for fuel; and Master Tommy will, I daresay, go with her, and show her how to draw them along."

"Yes, I'll show her," said Tommy, getting on his feet.

"Not just now, Master Tommy," said Ready, "but as soon as your mamma can spare her to go with you. Come, sir, a few hours of weather like this is not to be lost," continued Ready; "we shall have more rain before the day is over, I expect. If you please, sir, I will first go to the tent for the shovels, and take them down with me; then I will haul the boat round to the beach and meet you there. You and Master William can take some cord, tie up a large bundle of cocoanut boughs sling it to the wheels and draw it down to the beach and meet me."

"That will do, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, "Come, William."

CHAPTER XXX

Boat secured—Fishing—Storm—Arranging House—Ready's History—Consolation—To bed.

William and Mr. Seagrave found, on their arrival at the beach, that Ready had brought round the boat, and had laid the rollers all ready for hauling it up. In a very short time the boat was drawn up about ten yards from the water's edge, which Ready said was quite sufficient; they then dug from under with their shovels until the boat was sunk about half down in sand.

Having filled in the sand all round her up to her gunnel, the boat was then carefully covered over with the boughs, which were weighed down with sand, that they might not be blown away.

"I don't see why you should cover the boat up in this way, Ready; the rain won't hurt her," observed William.

"No, sir, the rain won't do her any harm, but the sun will,

when it bursts out occasionally; for it's very powerful when it does shine, and it would split her to pieces."

"I forgot that," replied William. "What shall we do now, Ready?"

"Suppose, as we have two hours to dinner-time, you run for the lines, Master William, and we'll try for some fish."

"We cannot all three of us fish with only two lines," said Mr. Seagrave.

"No, sir; and as Master William knows how to catch them, suppose you remain with him, and I will go up and collect wood and chips for Juno's fire. She was hard pressed for it this morning, it was so wet; but if once piled up, it will soon be dry. Be careful, Mr. Seagrave, if you please, and do not hold the lines tight in your hands, or you may be jerked into the water. I've cautioned Master William, but it may be as well for you to caution him again, for he is young and very eager."

Mr. Seagrave and William were very fortunate; before the two hours were expired they had caught eight large fish, which they brought up to the house slung on the boat-hook, which Ready had advised them to take with them to haul the fish out of the water, that they might not break their lines. Tommy hallooed loudly for fish for dinner, and as they had caught so many, it was agreed that the dinner should be put off until some should be got ready and they were not sorry to eat them instead of the salt pork which was to have been their only fare on that day.

They had hardly sat down to the table, when the rain came patterning down on the roof, and in a quarter of an hour the storm was so violent, and the thunder and lightning as terrific, as on the day before. All the outdoor labour was again suspended. Mrs. Seagrave, Juno, and Caroline took their work, for there was plenty to do with the needle and thread, and Ready soon found employment for the rest. William and Mr. Seagrave unlaid some thick rope, that Ready might make smaller and more useful rope with the yarns. Ready took up his sailing-needles, and worked eyelet-holes in the canvas screens (which they had put up in a hurry), so that they might be drawn to and fro as required; and Tommy was given a tangled hank of twine to clear out, which, as he was tired of doing nothing, he worked at very patiently. As soon as Ready had hung up the curtains, he looked under the bedsteads for a large bundle, and said, as he opened it, "I shall now decorate Madam Seagrave's sleeping-place. It ought to be handsomer than the others." The bundle was composed of the ship's ensign, which was red, and a large, square, yellow flag with

the name of the ship *Pacific* in large black letters upon it. These two flags Ready festooned and tied up round the bedplace, so as to give it a very gay appearance, and also to hide the rough walls of the cottage.

"Indeed, Ready, I am much obliged to you," said Mrs. Seagrave, when he had finished; "it is really quite grand for this place."

"It's the best use we can put them to now, madam," said Ready.

"I am afraid so," replied Mr. Seagrave thoughtfully.

"Ready," said William, after the candles were lighted, "you once half promised me that you would tell me your history; I wish you would tell us some of it now, as it will pass away the evening."

"Well, Master William, I did say so, and I shall keep my word. When you have heard my story, you will say that I have been very foolish in my time; and so I have; but if it proves a warning to you, it will, at all events, be of some use."

"We shall like to hear it very much," said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Well, madam, then you shall hear it;" and Ready then commenced his history as follows:

HISTORY OF OLD READY

"Of course you wish to know who my father and mother were: that is soon told. My father was the captain of a merchant vessel which traded from South Shields to Hamburg, and my poor mother, God bless her, was the daughter of a half-pay militia captain, who died about two months after their marriage. The property which the old gentleman had bequeathed to my mother was added to that which my father had already vested in the brig, and he then owned one-third of the vessel; the other two-thirds were the property of a very rich shipbuilder and owner, of the name of Masterman. What with the profits of the share he held of the vessel and his pay as captain, my father was well to do. Mr. Masterman, who had a very high opinion of my father, and gained much money by his exertions and good management, was present at the marriage, and when I was born, about a year afterwards, he stood for me as godfather. Everyone considered that this was a most advantageous circumstance for me, and congratulated my father and mother, for Mr. Masterman was a bachelor of nearly sixty years, without any near relations. A year after I was born my father was drowned at sea, his vessel and the whole of the crew being lost on the Texel Sands; and my

mother found herself a widow, with a child scarcely weaned, when she was but twenty-two years of age.

"It was supposed that my mother would still have sufficient to live upon, as the ship had been insured at two-thirds of her value; but, to the astonishment of everybody, Mr. Masterman contrived to make it appear that it was his two-thirds of the vessel which had been insured."

"How far the assertion of Mr. Masterman was correct or not, it was impossible at the time to say; but I do know that everybody cried out 'Shame,' and that if he did deprive the widow, he had much to answer for; for the Bible says 'pure religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction' (of course, Master William, with a view to assisting them) 'and to keep yourself unspotted in the world.' The consequence was, that my mother had little or nothing to live upon; but she found friends who assisted her, and she worked embroidery, and contrived to get on somehow until I was eight or nine years of age."

"But did not your godfather, Mr. Masterman, come forward to the assistance of your mother?" inquired Mr. Seagrave.

"No, sir, strange to say, he did not; and that made people talk the more. I believe it was the abuse of him, which he did not fail to hear and which he ascribed to my mother, which turned him away from us; perhaps it was his own conscience, for we always dislike those we have injured, becoming vexed with them, instead of being vexed with ourselves."

"Unfortunately, there is great truth in that remark of yours, Ready," observed Mr. Seagrave; "still, it is strange that he did not do something."

"It was very strange, sir—at least, so it appeared at the time; but he was very fond of money, and irritated at the reports and observations which were made about him. But, to go on, sir: I was a strong, active, hardy boy, and, whenever I could escape from my mother or school, was always found by the waterside or on board of the vessels: for I took naturally to everything connected with the sea. In the summer time I was half the day in water, and was a very good swimmer. My mother perceived my fondness for the profession, and tried all she could to divert my thoughts some other way. She told me of the dangers and hardships which sailors went through and always ended with my father's death and a flood of tears.

"Well, sir, I was little more than nine years old, when, on a very windy day, and the water rough, a hawser, by which a vessel was fast to the wharf, was carried away with a violent jerk, and

the broken part, as it flew out, struck a person who was at the edge of the wharf, and knocked him into the sea. I heard the crying out, and the men from the wharf and from the ships were throwing ropes to him, but he could not catch hold of them; indeed, he could not swim well, and the water was rough. I caught a rope that had been hauled in again, and leapt off the wharf.

"Young as I was, I swam like a duck, and put the rope into his hands just as he was going down. He clung to it as drowning men only can cling, and was hauled to the piles, and soon afterwards a boat, which had been lowered from the stern of one of the vessels, picked us both up. We were taken to a public-house, and put into bed till dry clothes could be sent for us; and then I found that the person I had saved was my godfather, Mr. Masterman. Everyone was loud in my praise; and, although perhaps I ought not to say it (indeed, I do not say it out of vanity), it was a bold act for so young a boy as I was. The sailors took me home to my mother in a sort of triumphant procession; and she, poor thing, when she heard what I had done, embraced me over and over again, one moment rejoicing at my preservation, and the next weeping bitterly at the thoughts of the danger I had encountered, and the probability that my bold spirit would lead me into still greater."

"But she did not blame you for what you had done?"

"Oh no, Master William; she felt I had done my duty towards my neighbour, and perhaps she felt in her own heart that I had returned good for evil; but she did not say so. The next day, Mr. Masterman called upon us; he certainly looked very foolish and confused when he asked for his godson, whom he had so long neglected. My mother, who felt how useful he might be to me, received him very kindly; but I had been often told of his neglect of me and my mother, and of his supposed unfair conduct towards my father, and had taken a violent dislike to him; his advances towards me were therefore very coolly received. I felt glad that I had saved him; but although I could not exactly understand my own feelings at the time, I was ashamed to say that my pleasure was not derived from having done a good action, so much as indulging a feeling of revenge in having put one under an obligation who had treated me ill."

"I think I could not have helped feeling the same, Ready, under such circumstances," replied William.

"If I had felt it in a true Christian spirit, Master William, it would have been different. Returning good for evil is the great

duty of a Christian, and had I saved Mr. Masterman, knowing that I was saving him with that feeling in my heart, it had been praiseworthy; but I did not know that it was he when I saved him; and the question is, had I known who it was that was struggling in the water, should I have risked my life for him? or if I had done so, would it not have been with the same feeling which I indulged in after having saved him?—a feeling that I had revenged myself on him for his conduct, for there is no revenge greater than in putting an enemy under an obligation.

"To go on with my story. Mr. Masterman made but a short visit; he told my mother that he would now take care of me, and bring me up to the business of a shipbuilder as soon as I was old enough to leave school, and that in the meantime he would pay all my expenses. My poor mother was very grateful, and shed tears of joy; and when Mr. Masterman went away, she embraced me, and said, that now she was happy as I should have a profession on shore and not go to sea. I must do justice to Mr. Masterman; he kept his word, and sent money to my mother, so that she became quite cheerful and comfortable, and everyone congratulated her, and she used to fondle me, and say it was all through me that she was relieved from her distress."

"How happy that must have made you, Ready," said William.

"Yes, sir, it did, but it made me also very proud; strange to say, I could not conquer my dislike for Mr. Masterman; I had nourished the feeling too long. I could not bear that my mother should be under obligations to him, or that he should pay for my schooling; it hurt my foolish pride, young as I was then; and although my mother was happy, I was not. Besides, as I was put to a better school, and was obliged to remain with the other boys, I could no longer run about the wharves, or go on board the vessels as before, and thus I was deprived of all my former enjoyments. I did not see then, as I do now, that it was all for my good; but I became discontented and unhappy, merely because I was obliged to pay attention to my learning, and could no longer have my own way. The master complained of me; and Mr. Masterman called, and scolded me well. I became more disobedient, and then, by Mr. Masterman's desire, I was punished. This irritated me against him, and I made up my mind that I would run away and go to sea. You see, Master William, I was all in the wrong; and so will all the boys be who are proud, and think they know better than those who have charge of them; and now only see, Master William, what I probably lost by my foolish conduct."

"Your misfortunes have, however, proved an incalculable benefit to us, Ready, observed Mrs. Seagrave; "for had you not gone to sea, and been on board the ship when the crew deserted us, what would have become of us?"

"Well, madam, it is some comfort to think that a worn-out old seaman like myself has been of some use. Perhaps, madam, as it is our usual time to go to bed, I had better leave off now, and tell some more of my history to-morrow evening."

"If you please, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave. "William, my dear, bring the Bible."

As soon as the evening prayers were finished, the screens were put up, and they were soon all in bed and fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXI

Ready's History.

THE next night, Ready went on with his story.

"I said last night that I determined to run away from school, and go to sea; but I did not tell you how I managed it. I had no chance of getting out of the school unperceived, except after the boys were all put to bed. The room that I slept in was at the top of the house—the doors I knew were all locked; but there was a trap-door which led out on the roof, fastened by a bolt inside, and a ladder leading up to it; and I determined that I would make my escape by that way. As soon as all the other boys were fast asleep, I arose and dressed myself very quietly, and then left the room.

"The moon shone bright, which was lucky for me, and I gained the trap-door without any noise. I had some difficulty in forcing it up, as it was heavy for a boy of my age; but I contrived to do so at last, and gained the roof of the house. I looked round as I stood in the gutter—there were the ships in the port, and the sea in the distance, and I felt as if I was already free: I forgot that I had to get down to the ground. At last I began looking about me, to see how it was to be done, and after walking to and fro several times, I decided that I could slip down by a large water-pipe which went right down to the ground; it was so far detached from the bricks, that I could get my small fingers round it; and I was then as light as a feather, and active as a cat. I climbed over the parapet, and, clinging to the pipe firmly with my hands and knees, I slid down, and arrived at the bottom in safety."

"It's a wonder you did not break your neck, Ready," observed Mrs. Seagrave.

"It was, indeed, ma'am; I often think of it now—but I thought of nothing then except my own wilful way. As soon as I was landed in the flower-bed, which was below, I hastened to the iron gates at the entrance, and soon climbed up and got to the other side into the road. I had no hat, for all our hats were hung 'on pegs in the schoolroom below; but I didn't care for that. I started as fast as I could towards the port, and when I arrived at the wharf, I perceived that a vessel had her topsails loose, and meant to take advantage of the ebb-tide which had just made; the men were singing, 'Yo heave yo,' getting up the anchor; and as I stood watching, almost making up my mind that I would swim off to her, I perceived that a man pushed off in her jolly-boat, and was sculling to a post a little higher up, where a hawser had been made fast; I ran round, and arrived there before he had cast off the rope; without saying a word, I jumped into the boat.

"What do you want, youngster?" said the seaman.

"I want to go to sea," said I, breathless: "take me on board—pray do."

"Well," said he, "I heard the captain say he wanted an apprentice, and so you may come."

"He sculled the boat back again to the vessel, and I climbed up her side.

"Who are you?" said the captain.

"I told him the same story, that I wanted to go to sea.

"You are too little and too young."

"No, I am not," replied I.

"Why, do you think that you dare go aloft?"

"I'll show you," replied I; and I ran up the rigging like a cat, and went out at the top-gallant yard-arm.

"When I came down, the captain said, 'Well, I think you'll make a sharp seaman by and by; so I'll take you, and, as soon as I get to London, I'll bind you apprentice.'

"The ship, which was a collier, was soon out of port, and before the day had dawned I found myself on the wide ocean, which was hereafter to be my home.

"As soon as the hurry and confusion were over, I was examined by the captain, who appeared to me to be a very rough harsh man; indeed, before the day was over I almost repented of the step which I had taken, and when I sat down cold and wet upon some old sails at night, the thoughts of my mother, and what distress I should occasion her, for the first time rushed into my

mind, and I wept bitterly; but it was too late then. I have often thought, Mr. Seagrave, that the life of hardship which I have since gone through has been a judgment on me for my cruelty to my mother, in leaving her the way I did. I was her only child, poor woman; she had nothing else to love but me, and it broke her heart; a poor return, Master William, for all her care and kindness! God forgive me!"

Old Ready left off for some little time, and the remainder of the party kept silence. William, who sat next to his mother, turned round to her and kissed her.

"I like to see you do that, Master William," said Ready; "it tells me that my story is not thrown away upon you, and I look upon that kiss as a seal that you'll never desert your parent." A tear trickled down Mrs. Seagrave's cheek as she returned her boy's embrace.

"I'll leave off now, if you please," said Ready: "I don't feel inclined to go on; my heart is full when I recall that foolish and wicked deed of mine."

CHAPTER XXXII

Speculations—Commence Outhouse—Tommy in disgrace—Thimble found
—Tommy forgiven—Ready's History.

NEXT morning Ready, Mr. Seagrave, and William set off with the cross-cut saw and hatchets, to commence felling the cocoanut trees for the building of the outhouse, which was to hold their stores as soon as they could be brought round from the other side of the island.

"I mean this to be our place of refuge in case of danger, sir," observed Ready; "and therefore I have selected this thick part of the wood, as it is not very far from the house, and by cutting the path to it in a zigzag, it will be quite hidden from sight; and we must make the path just wide enough to allow the wheels to pass, and stump up the roots of the trees which we are obliged to cut down, otherwise the stumps would attract attention. Not that I think we shall ever want it; but still it is a precaution which we may as well take, as it will not give us a great deal of extra labour."

"I agree with you, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave; "there is no saying what may happen."

"You see, sir, between ourselves, it is often the custom for the natives, in this part of the world, to come in their canoes from one

island to another, merely to get cocoanuts. I can't say that the other islands near us are inhabited, but still it is probable, and we cannot tell what the character of the people may be. We are now near the spot, sir."

"How far will it be from the house, Ready? We must not be too distant."

"I reckon we are not a hundred and fifty yards in a straight line, although the road will, by its turning, make it double the distance."

"Then I think this spot will do very well; so the sooner we begin the better."

"I'll just mark out the trees which are to stand, Mr. Seagrave, and those which are to be cut down, so as to leave about four feet of stump standing. Master William, will you please to take the other end of the line?"

As soon as they had planned the building, the axes and saw were in full use, and tree after tree fell one upon the other. They worked hard till dinner-time, and were not sorry at the prospect of sitting down to a rich mess of turtle-soup.

"My dear William, and you too, Mr. Seagrave, how very warm you are," said Mrs. Seagrave; "you must not work so hard."

"Cutting down trees is very warm work, mother," replied William, "and hard work will never hurt anyone, especially when he dines off turtle-soup; we are very hungry, and shall do justice to Juno's cooking. Why, Tommy, what's the matter with you?"

"Tommy and I are at variance," replied Mrs. Seagrave. "I had my thimble this morning, and had commenced my sewing, when I was called out by Juno, and Caroline went with me, and Tommy was left in the house. When I came back I found him outside, and on going back to my work, there was no thimble to be found; I asked him if he had touched it, and his answer was that he would look for it. He did look, and said he could not find it; I have asked him several times if he took it away, and his only answer is that he will find it by and by. I am certain he has taken it, but he will not say if he has or has not. The consequence is, that I have done no work the whole morning."

"Tommy, did you take the thimble?" said Mr. Seagrave gravely.

"I'll find it by and by, papa."

"That's not the answer, sir. Did you take the thimble?"

"I'll find it by and by, papa," said Tommy, whimpering.

"That's all the answer he will give me," said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Well, then, he shall have no dinner till the thimble makes its appearance," replied Mr. Seagrave.

Master Tommy began to cry at this intelligence. Juno appeared with the turtle-soup, the smell of which was very savoury; and Tommy cried louder when they had said grace and commenced their dinner. They were all very hungry, and William sent his plate for another portion, which he had not commenced long before he put his finger in his mouth and pulled out something.

"Why, mother, here's the thimble in my soup," cried William; "I had very nearly swallowed it."

"No wonder he said he would find it by and by," said Ready, smiling; "he meant to have fished it up, I suppose, from what was left of the soup after dinner. Well, Mrs. Seagrave, I don't mean to say that Tommy is a good boy, but still, although he would not tell where the thimble was, he has not told a falsehood about it."

"No, he has not," replied William. "I think now that the thimble is found, if he begs pardon, papa will forgive him."

"Tommy, come here," said Mrs. Seagrave; "tell me why you put that thimble into the soup."

"I wanted to taste the soup. I wanted to fill the thimble; the soup burnt my fingers, and I let the thimble drop in."

"Well, a thimbleful wasn't much, at all events," observed Ready. "And why didn't you tell your mamma where the thimble was? .

"I was afraid mamma would throw all the soup away, and then I would get none for dinner."

"Oh, that was it, was it?" said Mr. Seagrave. "'Well sir, I said you should have no dinner till the thimble was found, so, as it is found, you may have your dinner; but if you ever refuse to answer a question again, I shall punish you more severely."

. After dinner they went to their work again, and did not come in again till sunset.

"Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave, when the lights were lit, "if you are not too much tired, perhaps you will go on with your history."

"Certainly, ma'am, if you wish it," replied Ready. "When I left off, I was on board of the collier, bound to London. We had a very fair wind and a quick passage. I was very sick until we arrived in the Nore, and then I recovered, and, as you may suppose, was astonished at the busy scene, and the quantity of vessels which were going up and down the river. But I did not like my captain; he was very severe and brutal to the men; and the apprentice who was on board told me to run away, and get

into another vessel, and not to bind myself apprentice to this captain, or I should be beat all day long, and be treated as bad as he was. I knew this was the case, as the captain kicked and cuffed him twenty times a day. The men said that he did not do so to me, for fear I should refuse to be his apprentice; but that, as soon as my indentures were signed, he would treat me in the same way.

"Well, sir, I made up my mind that I would not remain in the collier; and, as the captain had gone on shore, I had plenty of time to look about me. There was a large ship which was ready to sail, lying in the stream; I spoke to two boys who were at the stairs in her boat, and they told me that they were very comfortable on board, and that the captain wanted two or three apprentices. I went on board with them, and offered myself. The captain asked me a great many questions, and I told him the truth, and why I did not like to remain in the collier. He agreed to take me; and I went on shore with him, signed my indentures, and received from him a sufficient supply of clothes; and, two days afterwards, we sailed for Bombay and China."

"But you wrote to your mother, Ready, did you not?" said William.

"Yes, sir, I did; for the captain desired me to do so, and he put a few lines at the bottom to comfort her; but, unfortunately, sir, the letter, which was sent on shore by the cook, never arrived. Whether he dropped it, or forgot it till after the ship sailed, and then tore it up, I do not know; but, as I found out afterwards, it never did get into her hands."

"It was not your fault that the letter did not arrive safe," said Mrs. Seagrave.

"No, madam, that was not my fault; the fault had been committed before."

"Don't dwell any more upon that portion of your history, Ready; but tell us what took place after you sailed for the East Indies."

"Be it so, if you please. I certainly was very smart and active for my age, and soon became a great favourite on board, especially with the lady passengers, because I was such a little fellow. We arrived safely at Bombay, where our passengers went on shore, and in three weeks afterwards we sailed down the Straits for China. It was war time, and we were very often chased by French privateers; but as we had a good crew and plenty of guns, none of them ventured to attack us, and we got safe to Macao, where we unloaded our cargo and took in tea. We had to wait some

time for a convoy, and then sailed for England. When we were off the Isle of France, the convoy was dispersed in a gale; and three days afterwards, a French frigate bore down upon us, and after exchanging a few broadsides, we were compelled to haul down our colours. A lieutenant was sent on board with forty men to take charge of us, for we were a very rich prize to them. The captain and most of the crew were taken on board of the frigate, but ten Lascars and the boys were left in the Indiaman, to assist in taking her into the Isle of France, which was at that time in the hands of the French. I thought it hard that I was to go to prison at twelve years old; but I did not care much about it, and very soon I was as gay and merry as ever. We had made the island, and were on a wind, beating up to the port, when a vessel was seen to windward, and although I could not understand what the Frenchmen said, I perceived that they were in a great fluster and very busy with their spy-glasses, and Jack Romer, one of my brother'-prentices, who had been three years ar sea, said to me, 'I don't think we'll go to prison, after all, Ready, for that vessel is an English man-of-war, if I'm not mistaken.' At last she came down within three miles of us, and hoisted English colours, and fired a gun. The Frenchman put the ship before the wind, but it was of no use; the man-of-war came up with us very fast, and then the Frenchmen began to pack up their clothes, together with all the other things which they had collected out of the property of our captain and crew; a shot was fired, which went clean over our heads, and then they left the helm, and Jack Romer went to it, and, with my help, hove the ship up in the wind; a boat came on board and took possession, and so there was one escape at all events. When the captain of the English frigate heard how the Frenchmen had behaved, he ordered all their baggage to be examined as they came on board, taking away everything which they had plundered."

We soon made sail for England, quite delighted at having escaped a French prison; but, after all, we only exchanged it for a Dutch one."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that two days afterwards, as we were rounding the Cape, another French vessel bore down upon us and captured us. This time we did not find any friend in need, and were taken into Table Bay; for at that time the Cape of Good Hope was in the possession of the Dutch, who, as well as the French, were at war with England."

"How very unfortunate you were, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Yes, madam, we were, and I can't say much in favour of a Dutch prison. However, I was very young at that time, and did not care much—I had a light heart. But bedtime is come; so I think I had better leave off now, if you please."

CHAPTER XXXIII

House struck by Lightning—Juno stunned—Thanks for Preservation—Lightning Conductor—Compensation—Ready's Narrative—Fishing.

A HEAVY storm came on soon after they had retired to rest; the lightning was so vivid that its flashes penetrated through the chinks of the door and windows, and the thunder burst upon them with a roar which prevented them obtaining any sleep. The children cried and trembled as they lay in the arms of Mrs. Seagrave and Juno, who were almost as much alarmed themselves.

"This is very awful," said Mr. Seagrave to Ready, for they had both risen from their beds.

As Mr. Seagrave spoke, they were both thrown back half stunned; a crash of thunder burst over the house, which shook everything in it; a sulphurous smell pervaded the building, and soon afterwards, when they recovered their feet, they perceived that the house was full of smoke.

"God have mercy on us!" exclaimed Ready, who was the first to recover himself, and who now attempted to ascertain the injury which had been done; "the lightning has struck us, and I fear that the house is on fire somewhere."

"My wife—my children!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave; "are they all safe?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Mrs. Seagrave, "all safe; Tommy has come to me, but where is Juno?—Juno!"

Juno answered not. William darted to the other side of the house, and found Juno lying on her side, motionless.

"She is dead, father," cried William.

"Help me to carry her out of the house, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready, who had lifted up the poor girl; "she may be only stunned."

They carried Juno out of the house, and laid her on the ground; the rain poured down in torrents.

Ready left them for a minute, to ascertain if the house was on fire; he found that it had been in flames at the farther corner,

but the rain had extinguished it. He then went back to Mr. Seagrave and William, who were with Juno.

"I will attend to the girl, sir," said Ready; "go you and Master William into the house; Mrs. Seagrave will be too much frightened if she is left alone at such an awful time. See, sir, Juno is not dead—her chest heaves—she will come to very soon; thank God for it—we could but ill spare the poor girl."

William and Mr. Seagrave returned to the house; they found Mrs. Seagrave fainting with anxiety and fear. The information they brought, that Juno was not killed by the lightning, did much to restore her. The storm now abated, and as the day began to break, Ready appeared with Juno, who was sufficiently recovered to be able to walk in with his support; she was put into her bed, and then Ready and Mr. Seagrave went to examine if further mischief had been done. The lightning had come in at the farther end of the house, at the part where the fireplace was intended to have been made; they found that it had melted down part of the iron kettle, and, what was a greater loss, that Black Nanny, the goat, was killed—the kids were, however, unhurt.

"We have indeed, been most mercifully preserved," said Mr. Seagrave.

"Yes, sir; thanks be to God for all His goodness," replied Ready. "I thought poor Juno was gone."

"I think we have a large roll of copper wire ready; have we not?" said Mt. Seagrave.

It was now broad daylight. William went out to prepare the breakfast, and Ready procured the coil of copper wire. This he unrolled and stretched it out straight, and then went for the ladder, which was at the outhouse which they had commenced building. As soon as breakfast was over, Ready and Mr. Seagrave went out again to fix up the lightning conductor, leaving William to do the work of Juno, who still remained fast asleep in her bed.

"I think, sir," said Ready, "that one of those two trees, which are close together, will suit the better; they are not too near the house, and yet quite near enough for the wire to attract the lightning."

"Yes, I agree with you, Ready; but we must not leave them both standing."

"No, sir, but we shall require them both to get up and fix the wire; after that we will cut down the other."

Ready put his ladder against one of the trees, and taking with him the hammer and a bag of large spike nails, drove one of the

nails into the trunk of the tree till it was deep enough in to bear his weight; he then drove in another above it, and so he continued to do, standing upon one of them while he drove in another above, till he had reached the top of the tree, close to the boughs; he then descended, and, leaving the hammer behind him, took up a saw and small axe, and in about ten minutes he had cut off the head of the cocoanut tree, which remained a tall, bare pole.

"Take care, Ready, how you come down," said Mr. Seagrave anxiously.

"Never fear, sir," replied Ready; "I'm not so young as I was, but I have been too often at the mast head, much higher than this."

Ready came down again, and then cut down a small pole, to fix, with a thick piece of pointed wire at the top of it, on the head of the cocoanut tree. He then went up, lashed the small pole to the head of the tree, made the end of the copper wire fast to the pointed wire, and then he descended. The other tree near to it was then cut down, and the lower end of the wire buried in the ground at the bottom of the tree on which the lightning conductor had been fixed.

"That's a good job done, sir," said Ready, wiping his face, for he was warm with the work.

As Ready had predicted, the rain now came on again with great violence, and it was impossible to do any work out of doors. At the request of William, he continued his narrative.

NARRATIVE OF OLD READY

"Well, Master William, as soon as they had let go their anchor in Table Bay, we were all ordered on shore, and sent up to a prison close to the Government Gardens. We were not very carefully watched, as it appeared impossible for us to get away, and I must say we were well treated in every respect; but we were told that we should be sent to Holland in the first man-of-war which came into the bay, and we did not much like the idea.

"There were, as I told you, some other boys as well as myself, who belonged to the Indiaman, and we kept very much altogether, not only because we were more or less of an age, but because we had been shipmates so long. Two of these boys, Jack Romer and Will Hastings, were my particular friends; and one day, as we were sitting under the wall, warming ourselves, for it was winter time, Romer said, 'How very easy it would be for us to get away, if we only knew where to go to.' 'Yes,' replied Hastings; 'but where are we to go to, if it is not to the Hottentots and wild savages; and when we get there, what can we do?—we can't get

any farther.' 'Well,' said I, 'I would rather be living free among savages, than be shut up in a prison.' That was our first talk on the subject, but we had many others afterwards; and as the one or two Dutch soldiers who stood sentry spoke English, and we could talk a little Dutch, we obtained a good deal of information from them; for they had very often been sent to the frontiers of the colony. We continued to ask questions and to talk among ourselves for about two months, and at last we resolved that we would make our escape. Now, you see, Master William, this was a very foolish business, and shows how unfit boys are to judge for themselves: we were only running into hardship and danger, without the slightest chance of our escaping. We should have done much better if we had remained where we were; but there is no putting old heads upon young shoulders. We saved up our provisions, bought some long Dutch knives, tied our few clothes up in bundles, and one dark night we contrived to remain in the yard without being perceived, when the prisoners were locked up; and raising a long pole, which lay in the yard, to the top of the wall, with a good deal of scrambling we contrived to get over it, and made off as fast as we could for the Table Mountain."

"What was your reason for going there, Ready?"

"Why, Hastings, who was the oldest, and, I will say, the sharpest of the three, said that we had better stay up there for a few days, till we had made up our minds what to do, and try if we could not procure a musket or two, and ammunition; for, you see, we had money, as, when the Indiaman was first taken, the captain divided a keg of rupees, which was on board, among the officers and men, in proportion to the wages due to them, thinking it was better for the crew to have the money, than to leave it for the Frenchmen; and we had spent very little while in prison, for spirits were not allowed, and we boys had not begun to chew tobacco, or smoke. There was also another reason why he persuaded us to go to the Table Mountain, which was, that as soon as our escape was found out, they would send parties to look for us, thinking, of course, that we had made for the interior; and we should have less chance of being retaken if we travelled after the first search was over. The soldiers had told us of the lions, and other wild animals, and how dangerous it was to travel, and Hastings said, that not finding us, they would suppose we had been destroyed by the wild beasts, and would not look for us any more. You see we had some sort of calculation, although we were foolish boys.

"We had walked about four hours, and began to feel very tired when the day dawned, and then we looked out for a place to conceal ourselves in. We soon found a cave with a narrow entrance, large enough inside to hold half a dozen of such lads as we were, and we crawled in. It was quite dry, and, as we were very tired, we lay down with our heads on our bundles, intending to take a nap; but we had hardly made ourselves comfortable and shut our eyes, when we heard such a screaming and barking, that we were frightened out of our lives almost. We could not think what it could be. At last Hastings peeped out, and began to laugh, so Romer and I looked out also, and there we saw about one hundred and fifty large baboons, leaping and tumbling about in such a way as I never saw; they were bigger than we were—indeed, when they stood on their hind legs they were much taller, and they had very large white tusks. Some of them were females, with young ones on their backs, and they were just as active as the males. At last they played such antics, that we all burst out into a loud laugh, and we had not ceased when we found the grinning face of one of the largest of those brutes close to our own. He had dropped from the rock above us, like magic. We all three backed into the cave, very much frightened, for the teeth of the animal were enormous, and he looked very savage. He gave a shrill cry, and we perceived all the rest of the herd coming to him as fast as they could. I said that the cave was large enough to hold six of us; but there was a sort of inner cave, which we had not gone into, as the entrance was much smaller. Romer cried out, 'Let us go into the inside cave—we can get in one by one;' and he backed in; Hastings followed with his bundle, and I hurried in after him just in time; for the baboons, who had been chattering to each other for half a minute, came into the outer cave just as I crawled into the inner. Five or six of them, came in, all males, and very large. The first thing they did, was to lay hold of Romer's bundle, which they soon opened—at once they seized his provisions and rammed them into their pouches, and then they pulled out the other things and tore them all to pieces. As soon as they had done with the bundle, two of them came towards the inner cave, and saw us. One put his long paw in to seize us; but Hastings gave him a slash with his knife, and the animal took his paw out again fast enough. It was laughable to see him hold out his hand to the others, and then taste the blood with the tip of his tongue; and such a chattering I never heard—they were evidently very angry, and more came into the cave and joined them; then another put

in his hand, and received a cut just as before. At last two or three at once tried to pull us out, but we beat them all off with our knives, wounding them all very severely. For about an hour they continued their attempts, and then they went away out of the cave, but remained at the mouth shrieking and howling. We began to be very tired of this work, and Romer said that he wished he was back in prison again; and so did I, I can assure you; but there was no getting out, for had we gone out the animals would have torn us to pieces. We agreed that we had no chance but the animals becoming tired and going away; and most anxious we were, for the excitement had made us very thirsty, and we wanted water. We remained for two hours in this way imprisoned by baboons, when all of a sudden a shrill cry was given by one of the animals, and the whole herd went galloping off as fast as they could, screaming louder than ever. We waited for a short time to see if they would return, and then Hastings crawled out first, and looking out of the cave very cautiously, said that they were all gone, and that he could see nothing but a Hottentot sitting down watching some cattle which were browsing; we therefore all came out, very happy at our release. That was our first adventure, Master William; we had plenty afterwards; but I think it is now time we should go to bed. It is my opinion we shall have a fine day to-morrow, sir; but there's no saying."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Fuel-stack—Stack complete—Salt-pan—Chance of Relief—Ready's History.

"WELL, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, "after breakfast, which is to be our next job?"

"Why, sir, I think we had better all set to, to collect the branches and ends of the cocoanut trees cut down, and stack them for fuel; Master Tommy and Juno have already made a good large pile, and I think, by to-night, we shall have made the stack, and so arranged it, that the rain will not get into it much. After that, as the weather will not permit us to leave the house for any time, we will cut our salt-pan and make our fish-pond; they will take a week at least, and then we shall have little more to do near home; I think the strength of the rains is already over, and perhaps in a fortnight we may venture to walk through the wood, and examine what we have saved from the wreck; we shall have plenty to do in sorting and preparing the different

articles before the fine weather returns, and we can then bring them round in the boat and fill our storehouse."

"And we are to explore the island, are we not, Ready?" said William. "I long to do that."

"Yes, Master William; but that must be almost the last job; for we shall be away for two or three nights, perhaps, and we must look out for fine weather. We will, however, do that before we bring the stores round in the boat."

"But how are we to make the salt-pan, Ready? We must cut it out of the solid rock."

"Yes, Master William; but I have three or four of what they call cold chisels—those short, thick pieces of iron, with one end sharpened, which are in the storehouse—and with one of them and a hammer we shall get on faster than you think; for the coral rock, although hard at the surface, is very soft a little below it."

The whole of that day was employed in piling up the cocoanut branches and wood. Ready made a square stack, like a haystack, with a gable top, over which he tied the long branches, so that the rain would pour off it.

"There," said Ready, as he came down the ladder, "that will be our provision for next year; we have quite enough left to go on with till the rainy season is over, and we shall have no difficulty in collecting it afterwards when the weather is dry; this must be kept for the next rainy season.

After supper, Ready, being requested by William, continued his narrative:

"I left off, if I recollect right, Master William, just as the Hottentot, with the cattle under his care, had frightened away the baboons who were tormenting us. Well, sir, we came out of the cave and sat down under the rock, so that the Hottentot could not see us, and we had a sort of council of war. Romer was for going back and giving ourselves up again; for he said it was ridiculous to be wandering about without any arms to defend ourselves against wild beasts, and that we might fall in with something worse than the baboons very soon; and he was right. It would have been the wisest thing which we could have done; but Hastings said, that if we went back, we should be laughed at. We had done wrong, and we would not do right because we were afraid of ridicule; in fact, we were determined to risk our lives and run into any danger and hardship, because we could not bear to be laughed at for our folly, as we deserved to be. Bear this in mind, Master William, and never let the fear of ridicule induce

you to do what is wrong; or, if you have done wrong, prevent you from returning to what is your duty."

"Many thanks for your advice, Ready; I hope William will not forget it," said Mr. Seagrave; "more people are laughed into error than persuaded into it."

"Well, sir, such was our reason for not giving up our mad scheme; and having so decided, the next point of consultation between us was, how we were to procure arms and ammunition, which we could not do without. As we were talking this over, I peeped from behind the rock, to see where the Hottentot might be; I perceived that he had laid himself down, and wrapped himself up in his kross, a mantle of sheep-skins which they always wear. Now we had observed that he carried his musket in his hand, when we first saw him, as the Hottentots always go out armed, and I pointed out to Hastings and Romer, that if he was asleep, we might get possession of his musket without his perceiving it. This was a good idea, and Hastings said he would crawl to him on his hands and knees, while we remained behind the rock. He did so very cautiously, and found the man's head covered up in his kross and fast asleep; so there was no fear, for the Hottentots are very hard to wake at any time; that we knew well. Hastings first took the musket and carried it away, out of the reach of the Hottentot, and then he returned to him, cut the leather thong which slung his powder-horn and ammunition, and retreated with all of them without disturbing the man from his sleep. We were quite overjoyed at this piece of good luck, and determined to walk very cautiously some distance from where the Hottentot lay, that in case he awoke, he should not see us. Keeping our eyes about in every direction, lest we should meet with anybody else, we proceeded nearly a mile towards Table Bay, when we fell in with a stream of water. This was another happy discovery, for we were very thirsty; so we concealed ourselves near to the stream after we had quenched our thirst, and made a dinner off the provisions we had brought with us."

"Well, sir, to go on; we waited till dusk, and then we continued our march towards False Bay as fast as we could. We knew that there were farmers down in the valley, or rather the side of the hills, and we hoped to obtain, by some means or other, two muskets. It was near twelve o'clock at night with a bright moon, when we had a sight of the water in False Bay, and soon afterwards we heard the baying of a large dog, and not far from us distinguished two or three farmhouses, with their cattle-

folds and orchards. We then looked for a hiding-place, where we might remain till the morning; we found one between some large pieces of rock. We agreed that one should watch while the other two slept: this Hastings undertook to do, as he was not inclined to sleep. At daylight he woke Romer and me, and we made our breakfast. From the place we were concealed in, we had a bird's-eye view of the farmhouse, and of what was going on.

"The farmhouse and buildings just below us were much smaller than the other two, which were more distant. We watched the people as they went about. In about an hour the Hottentots came out, and we perceived that they were yoking the oxen to the waggon; they yoked twelve pair, and then the Hottentot driver got in and drove off towards Cape Town, accompanied by a Hottentot lad and the big dog. Soon after that, another Hottentot drove the cows up the valley to feed; and then a Dutchwoman came out of the house with two children, and fed the poultry.

"We watched for another hour, and then the farmer himself made his appearance, with a pipe in his mouth, and sat down on a bench. When his pipe was out, he called to the house, and a Hottentot woman came to him with more tobacco and a light. During the whole of the day, we did not see any other people about the house, so we concluded that there were no more than the farmer, his wife, the Hottentot woman, and two children. About two hours after noon the farmer went to the stable and led out his horse, mounted, and rode away; we saw him speak to the Hottentot woman when he rode off, and she soon after went down the valley with a basket on her head, and a long knife in her hand. Then Hastings said it was time that we moved, for there was but one woman in the house, and we could easily overpower her, and get what we wanted; still there was a great risk, as she might give the alarm, and we should have to escape in the daytime, and might be seen and taken prisoners again. However, as it was our only chance, we resolved to go down to the farmhouse very cautiously, and be all ready to seize any opportunity. We crept down the hill and gained the fence, which was at the back of the farmhouse, without being discovered; we remained there for about a quarter of an hour, when, to our great joy, we observed the farmer's wife go out of the house, leading a child in each hand; apparently she was going to visit one of her neighbours, for she went in the direction of one of the other farms. As soon as she was a hundred yards

off, Hastings crept softly through the fence, and entered the farmhouse by the back door; he came out again, and made a sign for us to come in. We found him already in possession of a rifle and a musket, which had been hanging over the fireplace, and we soon handed down the powder-horns and ammunition pouches, which were hung up at a different part of the room away from the fireplace.

"Having gained these, Hastings set me to watch at the front door, lest anybody should return, while Romer and he looked out for something else in the way of provisions. We got possession of three hams, and a large loaf of bread as big as a small washing-tub. With these articles we made our way safe back to our retreat. We then looked round, and could see nobody in any direction, so we presumed that we were not discovered. As there was a sort of ravine full of rocks dividing the hill, which we were obliged to pass before we could get into the valley, unless we went down close to the farmhouse, we agreed that it would be better at once to cross it during the daytime, so that we should get that difficulty over, and, at the same time, be farther from the farmhouse. We did so; and found a very secure hiding-place, where we lay down, waiting for the sun to set before we started on our journey into the interior. We had not been there an hour before we heard the shrill cry of our friends the baboons, on the hill which we had left; and, after that, we perceived them going down towards the farmhouse, and very busy taking the fruit out of the orchard, throwing it from one to the other as fast as they could; for, you see, those cunning animals had found out that the coast was clear, and did not lose so good an opportunity. They were still busy with their work when the Hottentot came in sight with the cows; and when he approached the farmhouse, they all gave a loud scream, and scampered off as fast as they could. Then the Dutchwoman was seen coming back, and when she had gone into the house, and spoken to the Hottentot, we heard her crying, as she came out again by the back door. About an hour before dusk, the Dutch farmer came home on horseback, and, in a few minutes, we knew, by the shrieking and screams, that he was beating his wife; for you see, sir (that is, we suppose it was so), by her leaving the house, the baboons had ventured to rob the orchard; and I have no doubt it was taken for granted that they had carried off the different articles missing in the house; for they will take anything; so if it was unfortunate for the poor woman, it was lucky for us, as it removed the suspicion of our being there, and occasioned no search after us; so

we quite forgave the baboons all the annoyance they had given us in the morning, in consequence of the good turn they had done us in the evening. I think I had better leave off now, Master William, as it is getting late."

CHAPTER XXXV

Fish-pond—Alligator—Ready's Narrative.

THE fish-pond was commenced the next morning. Ready, Mr. Seagrave, and William went down together to the beach, and, after much examination, chose a spot about one hundred yards from the turtle-pond, as most eligible for the purpose; the water being shallow, so that at the part farthest from the shore there would not be more than three feet.

"Now, sir," said Ready, "this is a very simple job; all we have to do is, to collect small rocks and stones, pile them up wall-fashion inside, and with a slope outside, so as to break the force of the waves when the water is a little rough: of course, the water will find its way through the stones, and will be constantly changed. It's very true that we can at most times catch fish when we want them, but it is not always that we can spare the time; so it's just as well to have always a certain quantity at hand, to take out at a moment's warning; and we can, of course, catch them and put them in here when we have nothing else to do. Juno will be able to come down and take them out with the spear when we are away and she wants something for dinner. There's nothing like having a ready supply of provisions at all times.

"We have quite forgot another job which we must put in hand, sir," observed Ready; "but the fish-pend reminds me of it."

"What is that, Ready?"

"A bathing-place for the children, and indeed for us all; we shall want it when the hot weather comes on, but we will put it off till then. I can tell you, sir, that although I don't mind building this wall in the shallow water, I shall be very careful when the water is up to my knees, for you don't know how bold the sharks are in these latitudes. When I was at St. Helena, not very long ago, we had a melancholy proof of it."

"Tell us the story, Ready."

"Why, sir, I could not have believed it possible. I did know an instance, something of the kind, when I was in the East

Indies; but that was not a shark, but an alligator. A Dutchman, at Trincomalee, was standing on the beach, fishing in the harbour; an alligator swam right up to him, till his snout was within two feet of him; but the Dutchman, being on shore, did not care for him, when all of a sudden, the alligator turned short round in the water, and in so doing, with his tail he tripped up the Dutch man and threw him into the water, and then laid hold of him and dived down."

" Well, but a shark could not do that, could he? "

" Yes, sir. Two soldiers were standing on the rocks at St. Helena; the rocks were out of the water, but the swell just broke over them. Two sharks swam up to them in the same way as the alligator did, and one of them, with a blow of his tail, turning round the same way, tripped one of them off into the water, which was very deep. His comrade was very much frightened, and ran to the barracks to tell the story. About a week afterwards, a schooner was in Sandy Bay, on the other side of the island, and the people, seeing a very large shark under the stern, put out a hook with a piece of pork, and caught him; they opened him, and found inside of him, to their horror, the whole of the body of the soldier, except the legs below the knees: the monster had swallowed him whole, with the exception of his legs, which had been nipped off when it closed its jaws."

" I really had no idea that they were so bold, Ready."

" It is a fact; I assure you, sir; and therefore we cannot be too careful how we go into the water: you saw how soon the poor pig was despatched."

They worked very hard that day, and the walls rose fast out of the water. At sunset they broke off and returned to the house.

After supper, Ready continued his narrative. " We remained concealed until it was dark, and then Hastings and Romer, each with a musket on his shoulder and a ham at his back, and I, being the smallest, with a rifle and the great loaf of bread, which was slung to me by a string passing through a hole bored through the middle, set off on our journey. Our intention was to travel north, as we knew that was the road leading from the colony; but Hastings had decided that we should first go to the eastward, so as to make what we sailors call a circumbendibus, which would keep us out of the general track. We passed through the deep sands of False Bay, and after that gradually ascended, getting among brushwood and young trees; but we saw no signs of cultivation, nor did we pass one house after we had left False Bay astern of us. About twelve o'clock we were very much

fatigued, and longed for a drink of water, but we did not find any, although the moon shone as bright as day. We distinctly heard, however, what we did not much like, the howling and cries of the wild beasts, which increased as we went on; still we did not see any, and that was our comfort. However, daylight came at last; the wild beasts did not prowl any more; we walked on till we found a stream of water, where we sat down and took our breakfast, after which our courage revived, and we talked and laughed as we walked on, just as we had done before. We now began to ascend the mountains, which Hastings said must be the Swartz or Black Mountains that the soldiers had talked to us about, and when night came on, we collected brushwood, and cut down branches with our large knives, that we might make a fire, not only to warm ourselves, but to scare away the wild beasts, whose howling had already commenced. As soon as we had finished our meal, we lay down by the fire, with our muskets loaded close to us, and our ammunition placed out of danger. We were so tired that we were soon fast asleep. It was about midnight th^r. I was awakened by something breathing hard in my face, and just as I could recall my senses and open my eyes, I found myself lifted up by my waistband, and the teeth of some animal pinching my flesh. I tried to catch at my musket, but I put out my wrong hand, and laid hold of a still lighted brand out of the fire, which I darted into the animal's face: it let me drop directly, and ran away."

"What a providential escape!" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Yes, it was, ma'am: the animal was a hyena. Fortunately they are a very cowardly sort of beast; still, had it not been for the lighted stick, it would have carried me off, for I was very small then; and it lifted me up as if I was a feather in its mouth. The shout I gave woke Hastings, who seized his musket and fired. I was very much frightened, as you may suppose. This affair, of course, made us more cautious, and afterwards we lighted two fires, and slept between them, one always remaining on the watch. For a week we travelled on, and as soon as we were over the mountains, we turned our heads to the northward. We were now away from rocks and brushwood and entered a large plain. Our provisions were all gone, and we were one day without any; but we killed an antelope called a spring-bock, which gave us provisions for three or four days: there was no want of game after we had descended into the plain. I forgot to mention, however, a narrow escape we had, just before we had left an extensive forest on the side of the mountain. We had

walked till past noon, and were very much tired; we decided upon taking our dinner under a large tree, and we threw ourselves down in the shade. Hastings was lying on his back, with his eyes looking upwards, when he perceived on a lower branch of the tree a panther, which lay along it, his green eyes fixed upon us, and ready to spring: he seized his musket and fired it without taking aim, for there was no time; but the ball entered the stomach of the animal, and as it appeared, divided its backbone. Down came the beast, within three or four feet of where we lay, with a loud roar, and immediately crouched to spring upon Romer; but it could not for the backbone being broken, it had not any power in its hinder quarters, so it raised up its fore-quarters, and then dropped down again. I never saw such rage and fury in an animal in my life. At first we were too much frightened to fire; but, perceiving that the beast could not spring, Hastings snatched the musket from Romer, and shot it through the head."

"That was, indeed, another wonderful escape," observed Mrs. Seagrave.

"It was, ma'am; but do you know, we cared less for danger everytime we ran into it. We were now obliged to hunt for our livelihood, and we became bolder than ever. Our clothes were all in rags; but we had plenty of powder and ammunition; there were hundreds and hundreds of antelopes and gnus in the plain—indeed, sometimes it was impossible to count them. We didn't want for provisions, I assure you; but this plentiful supply of game was the cause of our being in greater danger, for now, for the first time, we heard the roar of the lions every night. Of all the noises I ever heard, it is certainly the one which, to my mind, is the most terrible. We made large fires to keep them off, but I assure you they often made us tremble when they came near to us."

"Did you ever meet with one in the daytime?" said William.

"Yes, sir; we often saw them, but they never attacked us, and we were too much afraid to fire at them. Once we met one face to face. We had killed an antelope called a hartebeest, and with our muskets on our shoulders, were running to secure it, having marked where it fell in the high grass. Just as we came up to the spot of grass, we heard a roar, and found ourselves not ten yards from a lion, who was lying on the top of the beast we had killed, his eyes flashing fire at us, and half raising himself, as if ready for a spring. We all took to our heels as fast as we could. I never looked back till I was out of breath; but the

lion was content with our running away, and did not take the trouble to follow us. We went to sleep that night without our supper. Well, sir, we had been travelling, we really hardly knew where, for three weeks, and were quite worn out, when one morning we fell in with a party of natives. We could not speak to them, but they appeared very peaceable and well-disposed. They were of the Karroo tribe, as they told us by pointing to themselves, and saying, ‘Karroos’; and then they pointed to us and said, ‘Dutch.’ We shot game and gave it to them, which pleased them very much, and they remained with us for five or six days. We tried by signs to inquire of them, if there were any Dutch settlements about there; and they understood us, and said that there were, in a direction which they pointed out to us, to the north-east. We offered them a present if they would show us the way; for we had made up our minds that we would give ourselves up to the Dutch, and go back to prison. Two of the men agreed to go with us; the rest of the tribe, with the women and children, went southward. The next day we arrived at a Dutch settlement of three or four farmhouses, called Graef Reynets; but I must leave off now, for it is past bedtime.”

CHAPTER XXXVI

William taken ill—Ready bleeds him—William in a fever—Out of Danger—Recovering—Ready’s Prudence—Ready’s Narrative.

One evening William was taken with a shivering, and complained very much of a pain in his head. Ready had promised to continue his narrative on that evening, but William was too ill to sit up. He was put into bed, and the next morning he was in a violent fever. Mr. Seagrave was much alarmed, as the symptoms were worse every hour; and Ready, who had sat up with him during the night, called Mr. Seagrave out of the house, and said, “This is a bad case, sir: Master William was working yesterday with his hat off, and I fear that he has been struck by the sun. It’s a pity but we had someone who could take some blood from him.”

“I have a lancet,” said Mr. Seagrave; “but I really have never bled anybody in my life.”

“Nor have I, sir; but if you have a lancet, I think it is our duty to try. If you think that you cannot, I will do my best; it is a very simple operation.”

" Well, Ready, one of us must do it, I believe."

" Perhaps my hand will be most steady in this instance, sir," observed Ready; " I'm fearful of the fever going to his brain."

" I would prefer your attempting it, Ready, I must say," replied Mr. Seagrave; " my hand would not be steady, I tremble so for my dear child."

They went into the house again. Mr. Seagrave found his lancet, and Ready bound up William's arm. As soon as the vein was swelled, he held it firm under the ball of his thumb, and was successful in the first attempt. By the advice of Ready a great deal of blood was taken from the sufferer, who appeared to be much relieved by the operation. His arm was then bandaged, and having drunk a little water, which he asked for, he again was laid upon his pillow. The next day the fever was as violent as ever. William was bled again, and his mother watched over him with anxiety and in tears. The poor boy was for many days in great danger; and the cheerful house was now one of gloom and silence. How fervent were now the morning and evening prayers; how often during the day did his parents offer up a petition to Heaven for their dear boy's recovery. The weather became finer every day. Ready, who could not be idle, had taken the hammer and cold chisel to make the salt-pan, at which he worked during those portions of the day in which his services were not required indoors; and as he sat chipping away the rock, his thoughts were ever upon William, for he dearly loved the boy for his amiable disposition and his cleverness; and many a time during the day would he stop his work; and the tears would run down his cheeks as he offered up his petition to the Almighty, that the boy might be spared to his afflicted parents. And those prayers were heard, for, on the ninth day, William was pronounced by Ready and Mr. Seagrave to have much less fever, and shortly afterwards it left him altogether; but he was so weak that he could not raise himself in his bed for two or three days; and it was not till more than a fortnight after the fever had left him that he could go out of the house. During his convalescence, as there was nothing to do, Mr. Seagrave and Ready determined, as the salt-pan was finished, that they would make a bathing-place. By the time that William was able to go out of the house, the bathing-place was finished, and there was no longer any fear of the sharks. William came down to the beach with his mother, and looked at the work which had been done; he was much pleased with it, and said, " Now, Ready, we have finished everything at home for the present; all we have to do is to explore the island, and

go to the cove and examine our collection from the wreck."

"Very true, Master William; and the weather has been so fine, that I think we may venture upon one or the other in a few days more; but not till you are stronger, for you must not be left alone with your mamma until you are quite well."

"Be left, Ready; why, I was to go with you."

"No, Master William, that cannot be now. Suppose we were to have a storm, and you were to get wet, and have to sleep in your wet clothes you might be taken with the fever again, and that when you were a long way from home: we must be prudent for a time. Sit down on the rock and enjoy that nice breeze, it will do you good; but you must not stay too long."

"I shall soon be strong again, Ready; thank God for His goodness."

"I have no doubt about it, Master William; and we have good reason to thank God, for we could ill spare you. I am going to take a turtle out of the pond, for we must feed you well, and make you strong."

"It's a long while since you have gone on with your story, Ready," said William, after they had taken their supper; "I wish you would do so now, as I am sure I shall not be tired."

"With pleasure, Master William," replied Ready; "but can you remember where I left off, for my memory is none of the best?"

"Oh yes; if you recollect, you had just arrived at a Dutch farmer's house, in company with the savages, at a place called Graef Reynets, I think."

"Very true, sir. Well, then, the Dutch farmer came out when he saw us coming, and asked us who we were. We told him that we were English prisoners, and that we wished to give ourselves up to the authorities. He took away our arms and ammunition, and said that he was the authority in that part, which was true enough; and then he said, "You'll not run away without arms and ammunition, that's certain. As for sending you to the Cape, that I may not be able to do for months; so if you wish to be fed well, you must work well while you are here." We replied that we should be very glad to make ourselves useful, and then he sent us some dinner by a Hottentot girl, and showed us a small room for us to sleep in. But we soon found out that we had to deal with an ill-tempered brutal fellow, and that he gave us plenty of hard work, but by no means plenty of food. He would not trust us with guns, so the Hottentots went out with the cattle, but he gave us plenty of work to do about the house; and at last

he treated us very cruelly. When he was short of provisions for the Hottentots and other slaves, of whom he has a good many, he would go out with the other farmers who lived near him, and shoot quaggas for them to eat. Nobody but a Hottentot could live upon such flesh."

"What is a quagga?"

"A wild ass, partly covered with stripes, but not so much as the zebra; a pretty animal to look at, but the flesh is very bad. Well, sir, he at last would give us nothing to eat but quaggas, the same as the Hottentots, while he and his family—for he had a wife and five children—lived upon mutton and the flesh of the antelope, which is very excellent eating. We asked him to allow us a gun to procure better food, and he kicked Romer so unmercifully that he could not work for two days afterwards. As for the poor Hottentots and slaves, they were flogged every day with a whip made of the hide of a rhinoceros, a terrible thing, which cut into the flesh at every blow. Our lives became quite a burden to us; we were employed all day on the farm, one way or another, and every day he was more brutal towards us. At last we agreed that we would stand it no longer, and one evening Hastings told him so. This put him into a great rage, and he called two of the slaves, and ordered them to tie him to the wagon-wheel, swearing that he would cut every bit of skin off his body, and he went into his house to get his whip. The slaves had hold of Hastings, and were tying him up, for they dared not disobey their master, when he said to us, 'If I am flogged this way, it will be all over with us. Now's your time; run back behind the house, and when he comes out with the whip, do you go in and seize the muskets which are always ready loaded. Hold him at bay till I get clear, and then we will get away somehow or another. You must do it, for I am sure he will flog me till I am dead, and he will shoot you as runaway prisoners, as he did his two Hottentots the other day.' As Romer and I thought this very probable, we did as Hastings told us; and when the Dutchman had gone towards him where he was tied up, about fifty yards from the house, we went in. The farmer's wife was in bed, having just given birth to another child, and the children we cared not for. We seized two muskets and a large knife, and came out just as the Dutchman had struck the first blow with the rhinoceros whip, which was so severe that it took away poor Hastings' breath. We went up; he turned round and saw us: we levelled our muskets at him, and he stopped. 'Another blow, and we'll shoot you,' cried Romer. 'Yes,' cried I; 'we are only'

boys, but you've Englishmen to deal with.' When we came up, Romer kept his piece levelled at the Dutchman, while I passed him, and with the knife cut the thongs which bound Hastings. The Dutchman turned pale and did not speak, he was so frightened, and the slaves ran away. As soon as Hastings was free he seized a large wooden mallet, used for driving in stakes, and struck the Dutchman down to earth, crying out, 'That, for flogging an Englishman, you rascal.' While the man lay senseless or dead—I didn't know which at the time—we tied him to the waggon wheels, and returning to the house, seized some ammunition and other articles which might be useful. We then went to the stables, and took the three best horses which the Dutchman had, put some corn in a sack for each of them, took some cord for halters, mounted, and rode away as fast as we could. As we knew that we should be pursued, we first galloped away as if we were going eastward, to the Cape; and then, as soon as we were on ground which would not show the tracks of our horses' hoofs, we turned round to the northward, in the direction of the Bushman country.

At last we decided that we should cross the country of the Bushmen, and get to the seaside, to the northward of the Cape. Having done talking, we took the saddles off our horses, and tethered them where there was good grass; for you see, sir, if we had not made them fast, they would have galloped back to the farm. We determined that it would be better to travel at night, as there would be less fear of the wild beasts, or of being seen; so we went fast asleep for many hours. Towards the evening, we found water for the horses, and then we fed them again, and proceeded on our journey. I won't tell what passed every day for a fortnight, by which time we had pretty well killed our horses, and we were compelled to stop among a tribe of Gorraguas I think they called them, a very mild, inoffensive people, who supplied us with milk, and treated us very kindly. We had some adventures nevertheless. One day, as we were passing by a tuft of small trees, a rhinoceros charged upon my horse, which very narrowly escaped by wheeling short round and getting behind him; the beast then made off without meddling with us any more. Every day we used to shoot some animal or other for provision: sometimes it was a gnu, a very curious creature, something between an antelope and a bull; at other times it was one of the antelope kind—there were plenty of them.

"Well, we stayed for three weeks with these people, and gave our horses time to refresh themselves; and then we set off again,

keeping more towards the coast as we went southward, for the Gorraguas told us that there was a fierce native tribe, called Kaffers, to the northward, who would certainly kill us if we went there. At last we decided that it would be better to find our way back to the Cape, and deliver ourselves up as prisoners, for we were tired out with fatigue and constant danger.

"I have now to mention a most melancholy event which occurred. Two days after we had recommenced our travels, in passing through some high grass, we stumbled on a lion, which was devouring a gnu. Romer, who happened to be some ten yards foremost of the three was so alarmed that he fired at the animal, which we had agreed never to do, as it was folly to enrage so powerful a beast, when our party was so small. The lion was slightly wounded; he gave a roar that might have been heard for a mile, sprang upon Romer, and with one blow of his paw knocked him off the saddle into the bushes. Our horses, which were frightened, wheeled round and fled, for the animal was evidently about to attack us. As it was, he did make one bound in our direction; we could not pull up until we had gone half a mile; and when we did, we saw the lion had torn down the horse which Romer had ridden, and was dragging away the carcass to the right at a sort of canter, without any apparent effort on his part. We waited till he was well off, and then rode back to the spot where Romer had fallen; we soon found him, but he was quite dead; the blow with the lion's paw had fractured his skull.

"We had no means of burying him, poor fellow! so we covered him up with bushes, and left him. We were both very melancholy indeed, as I rode on, I cried for nearly an hour; and Hastings never spoke a word until it was time for us to rest the horses. I ought to have said that the Gorraguas told us not to travel at night, but by day; and we had done so in consequence of their advice. I believe it was very good advice, notwithstanding this unfortunate accident, for we found that when we had travelled all night, the lions had more than once followed us the whole time. For three weeks more we had nothing but difficulty and suffering. One forenoon at last we saw the Table Mountain, and were as glad to see it as if we had seen the white cliffs of Old England. We pushed on our horses, with the hopes of being once more comfortably in prison before night, when, as we neared the bay, we observed that English colours were flying on board of the vessels in the road. This surprised us very much; but soon after that we met an English soldier who told us that the Cape had been taken by our forces more than six months ago. This

was a joyful surprise, as you may suppose. We rode into the town, and reported ourselves to the mainguard; the governor sent for us, heard our story, and sent us to the admiral, who took us on board of his own ship. Now, Master William, as this is a good place to leave off at, and you must be rather tired, I think we had better all go to bed."

CHAPTER XXXVII

South-sea Islands—Ready's Narrative.

THE next morning, as there was no particular work on hand, Ready and Mr. Seagrave took the lines to add to the stock of the fish-pond. As the weather was fine and cool, William accompanied them, that he might have the benefit of the fresh air. As they passed the garden, they observed that the seeds sown had already sprung up an inch or two above the ground, and that, apparently none of them had missed.

After supper Ready went on with his narrative.

"I left off at the time I was sent on board of the man-of-war, and I was put down on the books as a supernumerary boy. I was on board of her for nearly four years, and we were sent about from port to port, and from clime to clime, until I grew a strong tall lad, and was put into the mizen-top. I found it very comfortable. I did my duty, and the consequence was, I never was punished. The only thing which was a constant source of unhappiness to me was that I could not get to England again and see my mother. I had written two or three letters, but never had an answer; and at last I became so impatient, that I determined to run away the very first opportunity which might offer. We were then stationed in the West Indies, and I had very often consultations with Hastings on the subject, for he was quite as anxious to get away as I was; and we had agreed that we would start off together the very first opportunity. At last we anchored in Port Royal, Jamaica, and there was a large convoy of West India ships, laden with sugar, about to sail immediately. We knew that if we could get on board of one, they would secrete us until the time of sailing, for they were shorthanded enough, the men-of-war having pressed every man they could lay their hands upon. There was but one chance, and that was by swimming on board of one of the vessels during the night-time, and that was easy enough, as they were anchored not a hundred yards from our

own ship. What we were afraid of were the sharks, which were so plentiful in the harbour. However the night before the convoy was to sail we made up our minds that we would run the risk, for we were so impatient to escape that we did not care for anything. It was in the middle watch—I recollect it, and shall recollect it all my life, as if it were last night—that we lowered ourselves down very softly from the bows of the ship, and as soon as we were in the water we struck out for one of the West-Indiamen close to us. The sentry at the gangway saw the light in the water made by our swimming through it, and he hailed, of course: we gave no answer, but swam as fast as we could; for, after he had hailed we heard a bustle, and we knew that the officer of the watch was manning a boat to send after us. I had just caught hold of the cable of the East-Indiaman, and was about to climb up by it, for I was a few yards before Hastings, when I heard a loud shriek, and, turning round, perceived a shark plunging down with Hastings in his jaws. I was so frightened, that for a short time I could not move: at last I recovered myself, and began to climb up by the cable as fast as I could. I was just in time, for another shark made a rush at me; and although I was clear out of the water more than two feet, he sprang up and just caught my shoe by the heel, which he took down with him. Fear gave me strength, and in a second or two afterwards I was up at the hawseholes, and the men on board, who had been looking over the bows, and had witnessed poor Hastings' death, helped me on board, and hurried me down below, for the boat from our ship was now nearly alongside. When the officer of the boat came on board, they told him they had perceived us both in the water, close to their vessel, and that the sharks had taken us down. As the shriek of Hastings was heard by the people in the boat, the officer believed that it was the case, and returned to the ship. I heard the drum beat to quarters on board of the man-of-war, that they might ascertain who were the two men who had attempted to swim away, and a few minutes afterwards they beat the retreat, having put down D.D. against my name on the books, as well as against that of poor Hastings."

"What does D.D. mean?"

"D. stands for discharged from the service; D. D. stands for dead," replied Ready; "and it was only through the mercy of Providence that I was not so."

"It was a miraculous escape, indeed," observed Mr. Seagrave.

"Yes, indeed, sir; I can hardly describe my sensations for some hours afterwards. I felt so happy, that I thought I would risk the jaws of another shark to have regained my liberty, and

the chance of being once more on shore in my own country, and able to go to Newcastle and see my poor mother."

"I am afraid that your miraculous escape did you very little good, Ready," observed Mrs. Seagrave, "if you got over it so soon."

"The very next night, when I was in my hammock, I prayed very fervently; and there happened to be a very good old Scotchman on board, the second mate, who talked very seriously to me, and pointed out how wonderful had been my preservation, and I felt it. It was he who first read the Bible with me, and made me understand it, and I may say become fond of it. I did my duty on our passage home as a seaman before the mast, and the captain was pleased with me. I had told the history of my life to the second mate, and he pointed out to me how foolish and wrong I had been to leave my mother, and refuse the assistance of Mr. Masterman. I felt that he was right, and I felt more impatient than ever to throw myself into my mother's arms and ask her for forgiveness. The ship I was in was bound to Glasgow. The captain took me to the owners, who paid me fifteen guineas for my services during the voyage home; and as soon as I received the money, I set off for Newcastle as fast as I could. I had taken a place on the outside of the coach, and I entered into conversation with a gentleman who sat next to me. I soon found out that he belonged to Newcastle, and I first inquired if Mr. Masterman, the ship-builder, was still alive. He told me that he had been dead about three months. 'And to whom did he leave his money?' I asked, 'for he was very rich, and had no kin.' 'He had no relations,' replied the gentleman, 'and he left all his money to build an hospital and almshouses. There was a lad whom I knew for certain he intended to have adopted and to have made his heir—a lad of the name of Ready; but he ran away to sea, and has never been heard of since. It is supposed that he was lost in a prize, for he was traced so far. Foolish boy that he was, he might now have been a man of fortune.'

"'Very foolish, indeed,' replied I.

"'Yes; but he has harmed more than himself. His poor mother, who doted upon him, as soon as she heard that he was lost, pined away by degrees, and—'

"'You don't mean to say that she is dead?' interrupted I, seizing the gentleman by the arm.

"'Yes,' replied he, looking at me in surprise; 'she died last year of a broken heart.'

"I fell back on the luggage behind me and should have fallen

off the coach if the gentleman had not held me. He called to the coachman to pull up the horses, and they took me down, and put me inside; fortunately there was no one there; and as the coach rolled on, I cried as if my heart would break."

Ready appeared so very much affected, that Mr. Seagrave proposed that he should leave off his history for the present, and that they should retire to rest.

"Thank you, sir, it will be better; for I feel my old eyes dim with tears, even now. It's a dreadful thing in after-life to reflect upon, that your foolish conduct has hastened the death of a most kind mother; but so it was, Master William, and I give you the truth for your advantage. I told you that portions of my life would serve as a warning; let them not be thrown away upon you. God bless you, sir! God bless you, madam! Good-night."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Ready's Narrative.

WORK went on as usual the next day, and after supper Ready continued his narrative.

"I told you, Master William that I was informed by the gentleman on the coach that my mother had died of a broken heart, in consequence of my supposed death. I was in an agony until I arrived at Newcastle, where I could ascertain all the facts connected with her decease. When the coach stopped, the gentleman, who had remained outside, came to the coach door, and said to me, 'If I mistake not, you are Masterman Ready, who ran away to sea; are you not?' 'Yes, sir,' replied I, very sorrowfully, 'I am.' 'Well, my man,' said he, 'cheer up; when you went away you were young and thoughtless, and certainly had no idea that you would have distressed your mother as you did. It was not your going to sea, but the report of your death, which preyed so much on her mind; and that was not your fault. You must come with me, as I have something to say to you.'

"'I will call upon you to-morrow, sir,' replied I; 'I cannot do anything until I talk to the neighbours and visit my poor mother's grave. It is very true that I did not intend to distress my mother, and that the report of my death was no fault of mine. But I cannot help feeling that, if I had not been so thoughtless, she would be still alive and happy.' The gentleman gave me his address, and I promised to call upon him the next morning. I

then went to the house my mother used to live in. I knew that she was not there; yet I was disappointed and annoyed when I heard merry laughter within. I looked in, for the door was open: in the corner where my mother used to sit, there was a mangle, and two women busily at work; others were ironing at a large table; and when they cried out to me, ‘What do you want?’ and laughed at me, I turned away in disgust, and went to a neighbouring cottage, the inmates of which had been very intimate with my mother. I found the wife at home, but she did not know me; and I told her who I was. She had attended my mother during her illness, till the day of her death; and she told me all I wished to know. It was some little relief to my mind to hear that my poor mother could not have lived, as she had an incurable cancer; but at the same time the woman told me that I was ever in her thoughts, and that my name was the last word on her lips. She also said that Mr. Masterman had been very kind to my mother, and that she had wanted nothing. I then asked her to show me where my mother had been buried. She put on her bonnet and led me to the grave, and then, at my request, she left me. I seated myself down by the mound of turf which covered her, and long and bitterly did I weep her loss and pray for forgiveness.

“It was quite dark when I left the spot and went back to the cottage of the kind woman who had attended my mother. I conversed with her and her husband till late, and then, as they offered me a bed, I remained with them that night. Next morning I went to keep my appointment with the gentleman whom I had met in the coach: I found by the brass plate on the door that he was a lawyer. He desired me to sit down, and then he closed the door carefully, and having asked me many questions to ascertain if I was really Masterman Ready, he said he was the person employed at Mr. Masterman’s death and that he had found a paper which was of great consequence, as it proved that the insurance of the vessel, which had belonged to my father and Mr. Masterman, and which had been lost, had not been made on Mr. Masterman’s share only, but upon my father’s as well, and that Mr. Masterman had defrauded my mother. He said he had found the paper in a secret drawer some time after Mr. Masterman’s death, and that my mother being dead, and I being supposed to be dead, he did not see any use in making known so disagreeable a circumstance; but that, now I had reappeared, it was his duty so to do, and that he would arrange the matter for me, if I pleased, with the corporation of the town, to whom all Mr. Masterman’s property had been left in trust to build an hospital

and almshouses. He said that the insurance on the vessel was three thousand pounds, and that one-third of the vessel belonged to my father, so that a thousand pounds were due to him, which the interest for so many years would increase to above two thousand pounds. This was good news for me and you may suppose I readily agreed to all he proposed. He set to work at once, and having called together the mayor and corporation of the town, and proved the document, they immediately agreed that I was entitled to the money, and that it should be paid to me without any contest. Thus you see, Master William, was a new temptation thrown in my way."

"How do you mean a temptation? It surely was very fortunate, Ready," said William.

"Yes, Master William, it was, as people say, fortunate, according to the ideas of the world; everyone congratulated me, and I was myself so inflated with my good fortune, that I forgot all the promises of amendment, all the vows of leading a good life, which I made over my poor mother's grave. Now do you perceive why I called it a temptation, Master William?"

"My dear child," said Mr. Seagrave, "riches and prosperity in this world prove often the greatest of temptations; it is adversity that chastens and amends us, and which draws us to our God. Hath not our Saviour declared, 'That is it easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven'?"

"Yes, sir; you have well explained it; and such was the fact. As soon as the money was in my own hands, I began to squander it away in all manner of folly. Fortunately, I had not received it more than ten days when the Scotch second mate came like a guardian angel to save me. As soon as I had made known to him what had taken place, he reasoned with me, pointed out to me that I had an opportunity of establishing myself for life, and proposed that I should purchase a part of a vessel, on condition that I was captain of her. I liked this idea very much, and being convinced that I had been making a fool of myself, I resolved to take his advice; but one thing only restrained me: I was still very young, not more than twenty years old; and although I could navigate at one time, I had latterly paid no attention. I told Sanders this, and he replied, that I would take him as my first mate, that difficulty would be got over, as he could navigate well, and that I could learn to do so in the first voyage; so all was arranged.

"Fortunately, I had not spent above one hundred pounds of the money—quite enough too in so short a time. I set off for

Glasgow, in company with Sanders, and he busied himself very hard looking about for a vessel that would suit. At last, he found that there was one ready for launching, which, in consequence of the failure of the house for which it was built, was to be sold. He made enquiries, and having found who was likely to purchase her—that it was a very safe and respectable firm—he made a proposal for me, that I should take one-fourth share of her, and command her. As Sanders was very respectable and well known to be a steady man, his recommendation was attended to so far, that the parties wished to see and speak to me. They were satisfied with me, young as I was, and the bargain was made. I paid down my two thousand pounds for my share, and as soon as the vessel was launched, was very busy with Sanders, whom I had chosen as first mate, in fitting her out. The house which had purchased her with me was a West-India firm, and the ship was of course intended for the West-India trade. I had two or three hundred pounds left, after I had paid my share of the vessel, and this I employed in purchasing a venture on my own account, and providing nautical instruments, etc. I also fitted myself out; for you see, Master William, although Sanders had persuaded me to be rational, I was still puffed up with pride at the idea of being captain of my own ship. It was too great a rise for one who had just before been a lad in the mizen-top of a man-of-war. I dressed myself very smart—wore white shirts, and rings on my fingers: I even put gloves on, and tried to make my hands white. Indeed, as captain and part owner of a fine vessel, I was considered as somebody, and was often invited to the table of the other owners of the vessel. I was well off, for my pay was ten pounds a month, independent of what my own venture might produce, and my quarter share of the profits of the vessel. This may be considered as the most prosperous portion of my life; and so, if you please, we will leave off here for to-night, for I may as well tell you at once that it did not last very long."

CHAPTER XXXIX

Survey agreed upon—Remarks of Ready—Anticipations and Wishes.

FOR a week they had no rain, and the sun burst out very powerfully; and Ready stated that it was his opinion that the rainy season was now over. William had become quite strong again, and he was very impatient that they should commence the survey

of the island, and very anxious to be of the party. After a great deal of consultation, it was at last settled that Ready and William should make the first survey to the southward, and then return and report what they had discovered. This was decided upon on the Saturday evening, and on the Monday morning they were to start. After supper, Ready said, "Now, Master William, before we start on our travels, I think I may as well wind up my history. I haven't a great deal more to tell, as my good fortune did not last long; and my life was one continued chapter of from bad to worse. I left off where I had purchased a share of a merchant vessel, and was, in my opinion, on the full trip to fortune: so now to proceed. Our ship was soon ready, and we sailed along with a convoy for Barbadoes. Sanders proved a good navigator, and from him, before we arrived at Barbadoes, I gained all the knowledge which I required to enable me to command and navigate my vessel. Sanders attempted to renew our serious conversation, but my property had made me vain; and now that I felt I could do without his assistance, I not only kept him at a distance, but assumed the superior. This was a very ungrateful return for his kindness to me, Master William; but it is too often the case in this world. Sanders was very much annoyed, and on our arrival at Barbadoes, he told me that it was his intention to quit the vessel. I replied very haughtily, that he might do as he pleased; the fact is, I was anxious to get rid of him, merely because I was under obligations to him: I tell this to my shame, Master William. Well, sir, Sanders left me, and I felt quite happy at his departure. My ship was soon with a full cargo on board of her and we waited for convoy to England. When at Barbadoes, I had an opportunity to buy four brass guns, which I mounted on deck, and had a good supply of ammunition on board. I was very proud of my vessel, as she had proved in the voyage out to be a very fast sailer; indeed, she sailed better than some of the men-of-war which convoyed us; and now that I had guns on board, I considered myself quite safe from any of the enemies' privateers. While we were waiting for convoy, which was not expected for a fortnight, it blew a very heavy gale, and my ship, as well as others, dragged their anchors, and were driven out of Carlisle Bay. We were obliged to make sail to beat into the bay again, it still blowing very fresh. What with being tired waiting so long for convoy, and the knowledge that arriving before the other West-Indiamen would be very advantageous, I made up my mind that instead of beating up into the bay again, I would run for England without protection, trusting to the fast

sailing of my vessel and the guns which I had on board. I forgot at the time that the insurance on the vessel was made in England as 'sailing in convoy,' and that my sailing without would render the insurance void if any misfortune occurred. Well, sir, I made sail for England, and for three weeks everything went on well; but as we were running with a fair wind up channel, and I had made sure of being in port before night, a French privateer hove in sight, came alongside of us by the board, and that night I was 'in a French prison, and I may say a pauper; for the insurance of the vessel was void, from my having sailed without convoy. I felt that I had no one to thank but myself for the unfortunate position I was in; at all events, I was severely punished, for I remained a prisoner for nearly six years. I contrived to escape with three or four others; we suffered dreadfully, and at last arrived in England, in a Swedish vessel, without money or even clothes that would keep out the weather. Of course, I had nothing to do but to look out for a berth on board of a ship, and I tried for that of second mate, but without success; I was too ragged and looked too miserable; so I determined, as I was starving, to go before the mast. There was a fine vessel in the port; I went on board to offer myself; the mate went down to the captain, who came on deck, and who should it be but Sanders! I hoped that he would not remember me, but he did immediately and held out his hand. I never did feel so ashamed in my life as I did then. Sanders perceived it, and asked me down into the cabin. I then told him all that had happened, and he appeared to forget that I had behaved so ill to him; he offered me a berth on board, and money in advance to fit me out. But if he would not remember my conduct, I could not forget it, and I told him so, and begged his forgiveness. Well, sir, that good man, as long as he lived, was my friend. I became his second mate before he died, and we were again very intimate. My misfortunes had humbled me, and I once more read the Bible with him; and I have, I trust, done so ever since. When he died, I continued second mate for some time, and then was displaced. Since that, I have always been as a common seaman on board of different vessels; but I have been well treated and respected, and I may add, I have not been unhappy.

"I feel as if I could pass the remainder of my days on this little island with perfect content. I know you all feel otherwise; but that is natural. I am an old man already, and have nothing to look forward to."

"No, no, Ready, you must not think of that; you must go back

with us one of these days," replied Mr. Seagrave, "and live with us altogether. We never part again. You must give up your seafaring life, and sit in the chimney-corner, or bask in the sun out of doors, just as you please. You require repose, and I trust your old age will be cheerful. At all events, it shall not be my fault if it is not."

"Nor mine, Ready, I assure you," added Mrs. Seagrave; "I should feel uncomfortable if I were ever to be parted from you again."

"Thank you, madam, and thank you, sir, both of you; I thank you kindly for your good intentions towards me; but there is One above who will decide for us, and whatever He decrees is right."

CHAPTER XL

Set off on Survey—Through the Wood—Dinner—Discovery—Banana—Pepper—Prickly Pear—Guava—Parrots—Pigs—Sea-birds' Nests—Conversation—Harbour for Boat—Crayfish and Oysters—Return Home—Hemp.

THEY were all up early the next morning, and breakfasted at an early hour. The sun was shining brilliantly, and the weather had become warm; the ocean in the distance gleamed brightly as its waters danced, and the cocoanut trees moved their branches gracefully to the breeze. They set off in high spirits, and having called the two shepherd dogs, in time, they were clear of the cocoanut grove, and found themselves among brushwood higher than their heads; so that they could not see how far they were from the shore.

"Well," said William, throwing down his hatchet, "I'm glad that's over; now let us sit down a little before we go any farther."

"I'm of your opinion, sir," replied Ready, sitting down by the side of William; "I feel more tired to-day than I did when we first went through the wood, after we set off from the cove. I suppose it's the weather. Come back, dogs; lie down."

"The weather is very fine, Ready."

"Yes, now, sir; but I meant to have said that the rainy season is very trying to the health, and I suppose I have not recovered from it yet. You have had a regular fever, and, of course, do not feel so strong; but a man may have no fever, and yet his health suffer a great deal from it. I am an old man, Master William, and feel these things now."

"I think that before we go on, Ready, we had better have our dinner; that will do us good."

"Well, Master William, we will take an early dinner, and we shall get rid of one bottle of water, at all events; indeed, I think that, as we must go back by the way we came, we may as well leave our knapsacks and everything but our guns under these trees; I daresay we shall sleep here too, for I told Mr. Seagrave positively not to expect us back to-night." They opened their knapsacks, and made their meal, the two dogs coming in for their full share; after which they again started on their discoveries. For about ten minutes they continued to force their way through the thick and high bushes, till at last they broke out clear of them, and then looked around them for a short time without speaking. The sea was about half a mile distant, and the intervening land was clear, with fresh blades of grass just bursting out of the earth, composing a fine piece of pasture of at least fifty acres, here and there broken with small patches of trees and brushwood; there was no sandy beach, but the rocks rose from the sea about twenty to thirty feet high.

"Well, Ready," said William, "there will be no want of pasture for our flock, even if it increases to ten times its number."

"No, sir," replied Ready, "we are very fortunate, and have great reason to be thankful; this is exactly what we required; and now let us go on a little, and examine these patches of wood, and see what they are. I see a bright green leaf out there, which, if my eyes do not fail me, I have seen many a time before." When they arrived at the clump of trees which Ready had pointed out, he said, "Yes, Master William, I was right. Look here, this is the banana: it is just bursting out now, and will soon be ten feet high, and bearing fruit which is excellent eating; besides which, the stem is capital fodder for the beasts. God is gracious."

"Here is a plant I never saw before; this little one," said William, pulling up a piece of it, and showing it to Ready.

"But I have, Master William. It is what they call the bird's eye pepper; they make Ceyenne pepper out of it. Look, the pods are just formed; it will be useful to us in cooking, as we have no pepper left. Juno will be quite pleased. What a quantity of bananas are springing up in this spot; there will be a little forest of them in a few weeks."

"What is that rough-looking sort of shrub out there, Ready?"

"I can't see so well as you, Master William, so let us walk up to it. Oh, I know it now, it is what they call the prickly pear in the

West Indies. I am very glad to have found that, for it will be very useful to us."

" Is it good eating, Ready ?"

" Not particularly; and the little spikes run into your fingers, and are very difficult to get rid of; but it is not bad by way of a change. No, sir, the use it will be to us is to hedge in our garden, and protect it from the animals; it makes a capital fence, and grows very fast, and without trouble. Why, there's half an acre of them; they are just coming into blossom. Now let us go on to that patch of trees, and see what they are."

" What is this plant, Ready?"

" I don't know, Master William; I can't say that I ever saw it before."

" Then I think I had better make a collection of all those you don't know, and take them back to my father, for he is a very good botanist, and I daresay will know them all."

" We will do so sir; it is a very good thought of yours."

William pulled a branch of the plant off, and carried it with him. On their arrival at the next patch of trees, Ready looked at them steadfastly for some time.

" Let me see," said he; " I think I know that tree, I have often seen it in hot countries. Yes, I have it, Master William; it's the guava."

" What! is it the fruit they make guava jelly of? " said William.

" Yes, Master William, the very same."

" How Tommy will smack his lips when he hears of it. Captain Osborn gave us guava jelly on our passage out, and Tommy was never satisfied, he always wanted more."

" Little boys of Master Tommy's age do think more of eating than anything else; that's very natural, so we must not be too hard upon Master Tommy; he'll turn out a fine fellow yet, depend upon it, Master William."

" I'm sure I hope so, Ready, and I really think that he will. Shall we go now? "

" Yes, sir; which way would you like to go? "

" Let us walk in the direction of those five or six trees, and from there down to the rocks; I want to find out how it is that they are so white."

" Be it so, sir, if you wish," replied Ready.

" Why, Ready, what noise is that? Hark! such a chattering it must be monkeys."

" No, sir, they are not monkeys; but I'll tell you what they are, although I cannot see them; they are parrots—I know their noise

well. You see, Master William, it's not very likely that monkeys should get here, but birds can; and it is birds that we have to thank for the bananas, and guavas, and other fruits we may find here."

As soon as they came under the trees, there was a great rioting and fluttering, and then flew away, screaming as loud as they could a flock of about three hundred parrots, their beautiful green and blue feathers glistening in the beams of the sun.

"I told you so, sir; well, we'll have some capital pies out of them, Master William."

"Pies! do they make good pies, Ready?"

"Yes, excellent; and very often have I had a good dinner from one in the West Indies and in South America. Stop, sir, let us come a little this way; I see a leaf which I should like to examine."

"The ground is very swampy just here, Ready; is it not?"

"Yes; there's plenty of water below, I don't doubt. So much the better for the animals; we must dig some pools when they come here."

"Oh! I thought I was not wrong. Look, sir! this is the very best thing I have found yet—we now need not care much about potatoes."

"Why, what are they, Ready?"

"Yams, sir; yams, which they use instead of potatoes in the West Indies. Indeed, potatoes do not remain potatoes long, when planted in the hot climates."

"How do you mean, Ready?"

"They turn into what they call sweet potatoes, after one or two crops: yams are better things, in my opinion."

At this moment the dogs dashed among the broad yam-leaves and commenced baying; there was a great rustling and snorting.

"What's that?" cried William, who had been stooping down to examine the yam-plant, and who was startled at the noise.

Ready laughed heartily. "It isn't the first time they've made you jump, Master William."

"Why, it's our pigs; isn't it?" replied William.

"To be sure: they're in the yam-patch, very busy feeding on them, I'll be bound."

Ready gave a shout, and a grunting and rushing were heard among the broad leaves, and, very soon, out rushed, instead of the six, about thirty pigs, large and small; who, snorting and twisting their tails, galloped away at a great rate across the pasture-land, until they gained the cocoanut grove.

"How wild they are, Ready," said William.

"Yes, sir, and they'll be wilder every day: but we must fence these yams from them, or we shall get none ourselves."

"But they'll beat down the fence before it grows up."

"Yes, sir; but we'll pale it in with cocoanut palings, and plant the prickly pears outside; before the palings are rotten, the prickly pears will make a hedge which no animal can get through. Now, sir, we'll go down to the seaside."

"Why, Ready, what a quantity of good things we have found out already. This has been a very fortunate expedition of ours."

"Yes, it has; and we may thank God for His goodness."

They then walked along the seaside for about a quarter of a mile, until they came to where the rocks were not so high, and there they discovered a little basin, completely formed in the rocks, with a narrow entrance.

"See, Master William, what a nice little harbour for our boat; we may here load it with yams and take it round to the bay, provided we can find an entrance through the reefs on the southern side of it, which we have not looked for yet, because we have not required it."

"Yes, Ready—it is, indeed, a nice, smooth little place for the boat; but how shall we find it out again, when we come on this side of the island in the boat?"

"Very easily, Master William, for I'll fix up a flagstaff as a mark."

"What is that thing on the bottom, there, Ready?" said William, pointing in the direction.

"I see it, sir; that is a sea crawfish, quite as good eating as a lobster. I wonder if I could make a lobster-pot? we should catch plenty, and very good they are."

"And what are those little rough things on the rocks?"

"They are a very nice little sort of oyster, sir, very sweet; not like those we have in England, but very much better indeed, they are so delicate."

"Why, Ready, we have two more good things for our table again," replied William; "how rich we shall be."

"Yes, sir; but we have to catch them, recollect; there is nothing to be had in this world without labour. The world is full of all that is useful to man; but the Almighty has declared that it is by the sweat of the brow that we are to gain our bread."

"Ready," said William, "we have good three hours' daylight; suppose we go back and tell what we have seen: my mother will be so glad to see us."

"I agree with you, Master William. We have done well for



The still remained in silence and in tears staining his hands and
him. Wilhelm slowly kneelt down and folded his hands.

one day; and may safely go back again, and remain for another week, if that is all; that is, if we are wanted. There are no fruits at present, and all I care about are the yams; I should like to protect them from the pigs. But let us go home and talk the matter over with Mr. Seagrave."

William, as he walked away from the beach towards the cocoanut grove, picked a sprig of every plant he fell in with, to take back to his father. They found out the spot where they had left their knapsacks and hatchets, and again took their path through the cocoanut trees, following the blaze which they had made in the morning. One hour before sunset they arrived at the house, where they found Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave sitting outside and Juno standing on the beach with the two children, who were amusing themselves with picking up the shells which were strewed about. William gave a very clear account of all they had seen, and showed his father the specimens of the plants which he had collected.

"This," said Mr. Seagrave, "is a well-known plant; and I wonder Ready did not recognise it; it is hemp."

"I never saw it except in the shape of rope," replied Ready. "I know the seed well enough."

"Well, if we require it, I can tell you how to dress it," replied Mr. Seagrave. "Now, William, what is the next?"

"This odd-looking rough thing."

"That's the egg-plant: it bears a fruit of a blue colour. I am told they eat it in the hot countries."

"Yes, sir, they do; they fry it with pepper and salt; they call it bringal. I think it must be that."

"I do not doubt but you are right," replied Mr. Seagrave. "Why, William, you should know this."

"It is like the grape-vine."

"Yes, and it is so; it is the wild grape; we shall eat them by and by; perhaps make wine; who knows?"

"I have only one more, papa; what is this?"

"You don't know it, because it has sprung up so high, William; but it is the common mustard plant,—what we use in England, and sold as mustard and cress. Well, I think you have now made a famous day's work of it; and we have much to thank God for. Here comes Juno to get supper on the table; so we will go: the sun is just disappearing, and it will be dark in a few minutes."

CHAPTER XLI

Vessel in Sight—William and Ready—The Telescope—Flagstaff—Air Bedding—Preparations—Hoist Ensign and Flag—Hopes and Fears—Joy of the Party—Vessel hauls off—Disappointment.

As usual, Ready was the first up on the following morning, and having greeted Juno, who followed him out of the house, he set off on his accustomed rounds, to examine into the stock and their other possessions. He was standing in the garden at the point. First he thought that it would be necessary to get ready some sticks for the peas, which were now seven or eight inches out of the ground; he had proceeded a little farther, to where the calvances, or French haricot beans, had been sown, and had decided upon the propriety of hoeing up the earth round them, as they were a very valuable article of food, that would keep, and afford many a good dish during the rainy or winter season. He had gone on to ascertain if the cucumber seeds had shown themselves above the ground, and was pleased to find that they were doing well. Then he raised his eyes and looked out to the offing, and, as usual, scanned the horizon. He thought he saw a ship to the north-east, and he applied his telescope to his eye. He was not mistaken—it was a vessel.

The old man's heart beat quick. After a minute he again put his telescope to his eye, and then made her out to be a brig under top-sails and top-gallant sails, steering directly for the island.

Ready walked to the rocky point, from which they fished, and sat down to reflect. Could it be that the vessel had been sent after them, or that she had by mere chance come among the islands? He decided, after a short time, that it must be chance, for none could know that they were saved, much less that they were on the island. Her steering towards the island must then be either that she required water or something else; perhaps she would alter her course and pass by them. "At all events," thought the old man, "we are in the hands of God, who will, at His own time and in His own way, do with us as He thinks fit. I will not at present say anything to Mr. and Mrs. Segrave. It would be cruel to raise hopes which might end in disappointment. A few hours will decide. And yet I cannot do without help—I must trust Master William—he is a noble boy that, and clever beyond his years."

Ready rose up again, examined the vessel with his telescope, and then walked towards the house. William was up, and the remainder of the family were stirring.

"William," said Ready to him, as they walked away from the house "I have a secret to tell you, which you will at once see the necessity of not telling to anyone at present. A few hours will decide the question." William readily gave his promise. "There is a vessel off the island; she may be the means of rescuing us, or she may pass without seeing us. It would be too cruel a disappointment to your father and mother, if the latter were the case."

William stared at Ready, and for a moment could not speak, his excitement was so great.

"Oh, Ready how grateful I am! How I do thank God! I trust that we may be taken away, for you have no idea how my poor father suffers in silence—and so does my mother."

"I know it, Master William, I know it, and it is natural; they do their best to control their yearnings, and they can do no more. But now, Master William, we must be quick, and at work before breakfast. But stop, I will show you the vessel."

Ready caught the vessel in the field of the telescope, which he leant against the trunk of a cocoanut, and William put his eye to the glass.

"Do you see her, sir?"

"Oh yes, Ready, and she is coming this way."

"Yes, sir, she is steering right for the island; but do not talk so loud; I will put the telescope down here, and we will go about our work; there is an axe at the store-house. Come, Master William; come, quick, before your father leaves the house."

William and Ready went to the storehouse for the axe. Ready selected a very slight cocoanut tree nearest to the beach, which he cut down, and as soon as the top was taken off, with the assistance of William, he carried it down to the point.

"Now, Master William, go for a shovel and dig a hole here, that we may fix it up as a flagstaff. When all is ready, I will go for a small block and some rope for halyards to hoist up the flags as soon as the vessel is likely to see them. When the hole is deep enough, come up to breakfast as if nothing had happened. At breakfast-time, I shall propose that you and I get the boat out of the sand and examine her, and give Mr. Seagrave some work indoors."

"But the flags, Ready; they are round my mother's bed. How shall we get them?"

" Suppose that I say that it is time that the house should be well cleaned, and that the canvas hangings of the bed should be taken out to be aired this fine day. Ask your father to take the direction of the work while we dig out the boat; that will employ them all inside the house."

" Yes, that will do, Ready."

During breakfast-time, Ready observed that he intended to get the boat out of the sand, and that William should assist him.

" And what am I to do, Ready?" said Mr. Seagrave.

" Why, sir, I think, now that the rains are over, it would not be a bad thing if we were to air the bedding, as they say at sea; it is a fine warm day, and if all the bedding was taken out of the house and well shaken and then left out to air, it would be a very good job over, for you see, sir, I have thought more than once that the house does smell a little close."

" It will be a very good thing, Ready," observed Mrs. Seagrave; " and, at the same time, Juno and I will give the house a thorough cleaning and sweeping."

" Had we not better have the canvas screens down and air them too?" said William.

" Yes, sir," replied Ready, " we had better air everything. We will assist in taking down the screens and flags, and spread them out to air, and then, if Mr. Seagrave has no objection, we will leave him to superintend and assist Madam Seagrave and Juno."

" With all my heart," replied Mr. Seagrave. " We have done breakfast and will begin as soon as you please."

Ready and William took down the canvas screens and flags, and went out of the cottage with them; they spread out the canvas at some distance from the house, and then William went down to the beach with the flags, while Ready procured the block and small rope to hoist them up with.

Then they hoisted up the ensign first, and below it the flag, with the ship's name, *Pacific*, in large letters upon it. " Now then," said Ready, as he made fast the halyards, " let us strike a light and make a smoke; that will attract their notice."

As soon as the cocoanut leaves were lighted, Ready and William threw water upon them, so as to damp them and procure a heavy column of smoke. The vessel approached rapidly, and they were watching her in silent suspense, when they perceived Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, Juno carrying Albert, with Tommy and Caroline, running down as fast as they could to the beach. The fact was, that Tommy, tired of work, had gone out of the house

and walked towards the beach; there he perceived, first, the flags hoisted, and then he detected the vessel off the island. He immediately ran back to the house, crying out, "Papa! Mamma! Captain Osborn come back—come back in a big ship." At this announcement Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave ran out of the house, perceived the vessel, and the flags flying, and, as we have stated, ran as fast as they could down to where William and Ready were standing by the flagstaff.

"Oh! Ready, why did you not tell us this before?" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave, out of breath.

"I wish you had not known it now, sir," replied Ready; "but, however, it can't be helped; it was done out of kindness, Mr. Seagrave."

"Yes, indeed it was, papa."

Mrs. Seagrave dropped down on the rock, and burst into tears. Mr. Seagrave was equally excited.

"Does she see us, Ready?" exclaimed he at last.

"No, sir, not yet, and I waited till she did, before I made it known to you," replied Ready.

"She is altering her course, Ready," said William.

"Yes, sir, she has hauled to the wind; she is afraid of coming too near to the reefs."

"Surely she is not leaving us," exclaimed Mrs. Seagrave.

"No, madam; but she does not see us yet."

"She does! she does!" cried William, throwing up his hat; "see, she hoists her ensign."

"Very true, sir; she does see us. Thanks be to God."

Mr. Seagrave embraced his wife, who threw herself sobbing into his arms, kissed his children with rapture, and wrung old Ready's hand. He was almost frantic with joy. William was equally delighted. Juno grinned and laughed, while the tears ran down her cheeks, and Tommy took little Caroline by her two hands and they danced round and round together.

As soon as they were a little more composed Ready observed, "Mr. Seagrave, that they have seen us is certain, and what we must do now is to get our own boat out of the sand. We know the passage through the reefs and they do not. I doubt if they will, however, venture to send a boat on shore until the wind moderates a little. You see, sir, it is blowing up very strong just now."

"But you don't think it will blow harder, Ready?"

"I am sorry to say, sir, that I do. It looks very threatening to the southward, and until the gale is over they will not venture

near an island so surrounded with rocks. It would be very imprudent if they did. However, sir, a few hours will decide."

The brig hauled to the wind, with her head to the northward, and stood away from the island.

"She is leaving us," exclaimed William mournfully.

"Hard-hearted wretches!" said Mr. Seagrave, with indignation.

CHAPTER XLII

Grief and Despair—Chances—Speculation—More composed—Canoe seen—Island Women—Remarks—Savages—Surmises—Women taken to the House—Hopes and Fears—Indian Women escape—Council held—Plans proposed—Resignation.

THE evening closed in ; it was time to retire. The children had already been put to bed; but Mr. Seagrave remained without speaking, holding his wife by her hand. Mrs. Seagrave's head was rested upon her husband's shoulder, and an occasional low sob was to be heard. The countenance of Mr. Seagrave was not only gloomy, but morose. The hour for retiring to rest had long passed, when Ready broke the silence by saying, "Surely you do not intend to sit up all night, Mr. Seagrave?"

"Oh no; there's no use sitting up now," replied Mr. Seagrave, rising up impatiently. "Come, my dear, let us go to bed."

Mrs. Seagrave rose and retired behind the canvas screen. Her husband seemed as if he was about to follow her, when Ready, without speaking, laid the Bible on the table before him. Mr. Seagrave did not appear to notice it; but William touched his father's arm, pointed to the book, and then went inside of the screen, and led out his mother.

"God forgive me!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave; "in my selfishness and discontent I had forgotten—"

"Yes, sir, you had forgotten those words, 'Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Those words are true, sir; I have felt them to be so."

"I am ashamed of myself," said Mrs. Seagrave, bursting into tears.

Mr. Seagrave opened the Bible and read the psalm. As soon as he had closed the book. "good-night" were all the words that passed, and they all retired to rest.

During the night the wind howled and the rain beat down. The children slept soundly. but Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, Ready

and William were awake during the whole of the night, listening to the storm, and occupied with their own thoughts. It was the most unhappy night that had been passed since they first landed.

Ready was dressed before daylight, and out on the beach before the sun had risen. The gale was at its height; and, after a careful survey with his telescope, he could see nothing of the vessel. He remained on the beach till breakfast-time, when he was summoned by William, and returned to the house. He found Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave up and more composed than they were the evening before; and they welcomed him warmly.

"I fear, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, "that you have no good news for us."

"No, sir, nor can you expect any good news until after the gale is over."

"Tell me, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave, "do you really think that the vessel will come back for us?"

"I will tell you what our chances are, madam, and I can do no more. The vessel could not remain here during the gale—that is certain; and there is no saying what the effects of the gale may be. She may lie to, and not be far from us when the gale is over; or she may be obliged to scud before the gale, and run some hundred miles from us. Then, madam, comes the next chance. I think, by her running for the island, that she was short of water; the question is, then, whether she may not find it necessary to run for the port she is bound to, or water at some other place. You know, madam, that a captain of a vessel is bound to do his best for the owners. At the same time, I do think, that if she can with propriety come back for us, she will. The question is, first, whether she can; and, secondly, whether the captain is a humane man, and will do so at his own convenience."

"There is but poor comfort in all that, Ready," replied Mr. Seagrave.

"It is useless holding out false hopes, sir," replied Ready, "but even if the vessel continues her voyage, I consider we have much to be thankful for."

"In what, Ready?"

"Why, sir, no one knew whether we were in existence or not, and probably we never should have been searched for; but now we have made it known, and by the ship's name on the flag, they know who we are, and if they arrive safe in port, will not fail to communicate the intelligence to your friends. Is not that a great deal to be thankful for? We may not be taken off by this vessel, but we have every hope that another will be sent out to us."

"Very true, Ready; I ought to have seen that before; but my despair and disappointment were yesterday so great, that it almost took away my reason. We must trust in God."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, sir," replied Ready; "I thought you would soon return to your usual frame of mind."

The gale continued during the day, and showed no symptoms of abatement when they again retired for the night. The following day Ready was up early, as usual, and William accompanied him to the beach.

"Ready! Ready!" exclaimed William, pointing to the south-east part of the reef; "what is that! Look! it's a boat."

Ready put his telescope to his eye. "It's a canoe, Master William, and there are people in it."

"Why, where can they have come from, Ready? See! they are among the breakers; they will be lost. Let us go towards them, Ready."

They hastened along the beach to the spot nearest to where the canoe was tossing on the surf, and watched it as it approached the shore.

"Master William, this canoe must have been blown off from the large island, which lies out there;" and Ready again looked through his telescope: "there are two people in it, and they are islanders. Poor things, they struggle hard for their lives, and seem much exhausted; but they have passed through the most dangerous part of the reef."

"Yes," replied William, "they will soon be in smoother water; but the surf on the beach is very heavy."

"They won't mind that, if their strength don't fail them—they manage the canoe beautifully."

During this conversation the canoe had rapidly come towards the land. In a moment or two afterwards it passed through the surf and grounded on the beach. The two people in it had just strength enough left to paddle through the surf, and then they dropped down in the bottom of the canoe quite exhausted.

"Let's drag the canoe higher up, Master William. Poor creatures! they are nearly dead."

While dragging it up, Ready observed that the occupants were both women: their faces were tattooed all over, which disfigured them very much; otherwise they were young, and might have been good-looking.

"Shall I run up and get something for them, Ready?"

"Do, Master William; ask Juno to give you some of whatever there is for breakfast; anything warm."

William soon returned with some thin oatmeal porridge, which Juno had been preparing for breakfast; and was followed by Mr. Seagrave. As the women were now able to sit up, they hauled up the canoe as far as they could, to prevent her being beat to pieces.

"You see, sir," said Ready, "it is very clear that these two poor women, having been left in charge of the canoe, have been blown off from the shore of one of the islands to the south-east; they must have been contending with the gale ever since the day before yesterday, and, as it appears, without food or water. It's a mercy that they gained this island."

"It is so," replied Mr. Seagrave; "but to tell the truth, I am not so over-pleased at their arrival. It proves what we were not sure of before, that we have very near neighbours, who may probably pay us a very unwelcome visit."

"That may be, sir," replied Ready; "still, these two poor creatures being thrown on shore here does not make the matter worse, or the danger greater."

"We had better get these poor creatures up to the house, and let them recover themselves," observed Ready.

"Yes; I presume they will understand signs."

Ready then beckoned to them to get on their feet, which they both did, although with some difficulty. He then went in advance, making a sign for them to follow; they understood him, and made the attempt, but were so weak, that they would have fallen if they had not been supported by Mr. Seagrave and William.

It required a long time for them to arrive at the house. Mrs. Seagrave, who knew what had happened, received them very kindly, and Juno had a mess ready, which she put before them. They ate a little, and then lay down, and were soon sound asleep.

"It is fortunate for us that they are women," observed Mr. Seagrave: "we should have had great difficulty had they been men."

"Yes, sir," replied Ready; "but still we must not trust women too much at first, for they are savages. If it is the will of God that we still remain on this island, they may be useful to us in many ways—indeed, I may say, be very valuable to us, as we have plenty of employment for them."

"Where shall we put them to-night, Ready?"

"Why, sir, I have been thinking about that. I wish we had a shed close to us but as we have not, we must let them sleep in the storehouse."

"Yes, that will do very well."

We must now pass over a space of fifteen days, in which there was nothing done. The expectation of the vessel returning was still alive, although each day decreased these hopes. Every morning Ready and William were at the beach with the telescope, and the whole of the day was passed in surmises, hopes, and fears. In fact, the appearance of the vessel and the expectation of leaving the island had completely overturned all the regularity and content of our island party. No other subject was broached—not any of the work proposed was begun, as it was useless to do anything if they were to leave the island. After the first week had passed, they felt that every day their chances were more adverse, and at the end of the fortnight all hopes were very unwillingly abandoned.

The Indian women had, in the meantime, recovered their fatigues, and appeared to be very mild and tractable. Whatever they were able to do, they did cheerfully, and had already gained a few words of English. The party to explore was again talked over, and arranged for the following Monday, when a new misfortune fell on them, which disconcerted all their arrangements.

On the Saturday morning, when Ready, as usual, went his rounds, as he walked along the beach, he perceived that the Indian canoe was missing. It had been hauled up clear of the water, so that it could not have floated away. Ready's heart misgave him; he looked through his telescope in the direction of the large island, and thought he could distinguish a speck on the water at a great distance. As he was thus occupied, William came down to him.

"Master William," said Ready, "I fear those island women have escaped in their canoe. Run up and see if they are in the outhouse, or anywhere else, and let me know as soon as you can."

William in a few minutes returned, breathless, stating that the women were not to be found, and that they had evidently carried away with them a quantity of the large nails and other pieces of iron which were in the small kegs in the storehouse.

"This is bad, Master William—very bad indeed; this is worse than the vessel not coming back."

"Why, we can do without them, Ready."

"Yes, sir; but when they get back to their own people, and show them the iron they have brought with them, and describe how much more there is to be had, depend upon it, we shall have a visit from them in numbers, that they may obtain more. I ought to have known better than to have left the canoe here; it

should have been burnt. We must go and consult with Mr. Seagrave, for the sooner we begin to work now the better. Come, Master William; but recollect, we must make light of this to your mamma."

They communicated the intelligence to Mr. Seagrave when they were outside. He at once perceived their danger; but considered it better to acquaint Mrs. Seagrave with it, and to conceal nothing.

This was done accordingly, and then they held a council, and came to the following resolutions:—

That it would be necessary that they should immediately stockade the storehouse, so as to render it impossible for anyone to get in; and that, as soon as the fortification was complete, the storehouse should be turned into their dwelling-house; and such stores as could be put within the stockade should be removed to their present house, or concealed in the cocoanut grove. That after they had thus arranged for their security against any sudden attack, they would follow up their former plans.

It was decided that nothing should be begun on that day, Saturday; that Sunday should be spent in devout prayer for help and encouragement from the Almighty, who would do towards them as His wisdom should ordain; and that, on Monday, with the blessing of God, they would recommence their labour.

"I don't know why, but I feel more courage, now that there is a prospect of danger, than I felt when there was little or none," said Mrs. Seagrave.

"I do not doubt it, madam; and, should it be called into request, that you will prove it; which I hope may not be the case."

"How little do we know what the day may bring forth!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave. "How joyful were our anticipations when the vessel hoisted her colours! we felt sure that we were to be taken off the island. The same gale that drove the vessel away brought down to us the island women. The fair weather after the gale, which we hoped would have brought back the vessel to our succour, on the contrary enabled the women to escape in the canoe, and make known our existence to those who may come to destroy us. How true it is that man plans in vain: how true that he is as naught; and that it is only by the Almighty will and pleasure that he can obtain his ends. All that we can say is, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' "

CHAPTER XLIII

Consultation—The Tents—Pigs in Yams—Arrangements.

RECENT events had done much towards spoiling the peace which, until then, had reigned over the shipwrecked family. The ship which had sailed away and the women who had gone in the night had brought about this situation. But worse might easily happen. The women would in all possibility guide their men-folk back to the island to capture the stores which would prove valuable to them.

Accordingly, it was decided to transfer the little camp to a spot on the other side of the island, close to the plantation of bananas and yams. The family could stay there in comparative safety and the men could go to and fro to the old spot and build a stockade by way of protection.

Ready and William went on ahead and set up the tents: the others followed in due course, driving the animals through the cocoanut grove, which was no easy matter. At last they arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave could not help exclaiming, "How beautiful!"

When they came to where the tents were pitched by the side of the bananas, they were equally pleased: it was quite a fairy spot. Mrs. Seagrave went into her tent to repose after her fatigue; the goats and sheep were allowed to stray away as they pleased, and were feeding with avidity upon the fresh herbage; the dogs lay down, panting with their long journey; Juno put little Albert on the bed, while she went with William to collect fuel to cook the dinner; Ready went to the pits to get some water, while Mr. Seagrave walked about, examining the different clumps of trees with which the meadow was studded; Caroline was in the tent with her mother, and Tommy sat on the ground and stared about him.

When Ready returned with the buckets of water, he called the dogs, and went back towards the yam-plantation. Tommy got up after a while, and followed; the dogs went into the yams, and were soon barking furiously, which pleased Tommy very much; when, of a sudden, out burst again in a drove all the pigs, followed by the dogs, and so close to Tommy that he screamed with fright, and tumbled over head and heels.

"I thought you were there, my gentlemen," said Ready, looking after the pigs; "the sooner we fence you out the better."

The pigs scampered away, and went into the cocoanut grove, as they had done before. Tommy also scampered away as soon as he could recover his legs. The dogs followed the pigs, and did not return for a long while afterwards, and then came back hot and tired, proving that they must have chased them for a long distance.

It was late before the dinner was ready, and they were all very glad to go early to bed.

At day-dawn, William and Ready had again started, and walked through the cocoanut grove back to the house, to bring round in the boat the articles of furniture and the clothes which had been left. They then set off again for their new residence, and arrived in time for breakfast. After the meal was over, they were assisted by Juno and Mr. Seagrave in bringing the contents of the boat up to the tents.

"What a delightful spot this is," said Mrs. Seagrave. "I think we ought always to make it our summer residence, and only go back to the house during the rainy season."

"It is much cooler here, madam, during the summer, and much more pleasant; but we are more protected in the house by the cocoanut grove."

"Yes; that is true, and it is very valuable during the rainy season; but it makes it warmer in the summertime: we have not such a nice breeze as we have here. I assure you, Ready, that I like the change, and shall be sorry when we have to go back again."

"I saw such pretty parrots this morning," said little Caroline; "I wish I had one for my very own."

"I'll try, miss, to find you a young one by and by; but it is too soon yet," replied Ready. "Now I must go and help Juno to cut up the turtle. We must make our larder among the banana trees."

"But what are we all to do, Ready?" said Mr. Seagrave; "we must not be idle."

"No, sir; but I think we must give up this day to putting everything to rights, and making everything comfortable inside the tents; we must be at Mrs. Seagrave's orders to-day, and to-morrow we will commence the ditch and hedge round the yam-plantation. We need not work very hard at it, for I don't think the pigs will venture here again, as I mean to tie up all the dogs round the yam-patch, every night, and their barking will keep them off. When we have done that job, we must then commence our alterations and our stockade."

CHAPTER XLIV

Fencing the Yams—Departure for Cove.

THE next morning they went with their shovels to the yam-plantation, and commenced their work. As the ground was soft and swampy, the labour was very easy. The ditch was dug nearly a yard wide, and then the earth thrown up on a bank inside. They then went to where the large patch of prickly pears grew, and cut a quantity, which they planted on the top of the bank. Before night, they had finished about nine or ten yards of the hedge and ditch.

"I don't think that the pigs will get over that when it is finished," said Ready; "and Master William will be able to get on by himself when we are gone, as well as if we were with him."

In time, Mr. Seagrave and Ready set off. First, they went to their wooden house and, having looked at the crops which were doing nicely, they set off again to the scene of the wreck. There they found the major part of their stores exactly as they had left them. There was oil, stationery, needles, ribbons and laces, axes, books, bags of nails, a lovely dinner set and a host of other useful things. Some they left behind for future use: others they took with them.

On the way back, they fell in with the squealing pigs and Ready shot one of them. The pig was soon slung, and they carried it between them. As they cleared the wood, they perceived Mrs. Seagrave and William, who had heard the report of the musket and had come out to meet them. Mrs. Seagrave was a little agitated; but as soon as she saw the pig, she knew why the musket had been fired.

As soon as they were at the tents, Ready hung up the pig to the cross pole of the tent in which he and William and Mr. Seagrave slept, and having propped the muskets up against the side of the tent, he went with William to get his knife and some stretchers of wood to open the pig with. While he and William were away, Caroline and Tommy came out to look at the pig, and Tommy, after telling Caroline how glad he was that they were to have roast pig for dinner, took up one of the muskets, and said, "Now Caroline, I'll shoot the pig."

"Oh, Tommy, you must not touch the gun," cried Caroline;

"papa will be very angry; recollect you made it go off when we were at the cove."

"I don't care," replied Tommy. "I'll show you how to shoot the pig."

"Don't, Tommy," cried Caroline; "if you do, I'll go and tell mamma."

"Then I'll shoot you," replied Tommy, trying to point the musket at her.

Caroline was so frightened that she ran away as fast as she could, and then Tommy, using all his strength, contrived to get the musket up to his shoulder, and pulled the trigger.

It so happened that Tommy had taken up Mr. Seagrave's musket, which had not been fired, and when he pulled the trigger it went off, and as he did not hold it tight to his shoulder, it recoiled, and hit him with the butt right on his face, knocking out two of his teeth, and bruising his cheek very much, besides making his nose bleed very fast.

Tommy was so astonished and frightened at the musket going off, and the blow which he had received, that he gave a loud yell, dropped the musket, and ran to the tent where his father and mother were, just as they had started up and had rushed out at hearing the report.

When Mrs. Seagrave saw Tommy all covered with blood, and screaming so loud, she was so alarmed that she could not stand, and she fell fainting in Mr. Seagrave's arms. Ready and William on hearing the musket go off, had run as fast as they could, fearing that some accident had happened; and while Mr. Seagrave supported his wife, Ready went to Tommy, and wiping the blood off his face with the palm of his hand, perceived that there was no wound or serious mischief, and cried out to Mr. Seagrave, "He's not hurt, sir; it's only his nose bleeding. Leave off crying and screaming, you naughty boy. How dare you touch the musket!"

"Musket knock me down," cried Tommy, sobbing as the blood ran out of his mouth.

"Serve you right, Master Tommy; you'll take care not to touch the musket again."

"I won't touch it again," cried Tommy, blubbering; "it shoot me."

Juno now came up with some water to wash his face; Mrs. Seagrave had recovered, and gone back into the tent, on Mr. Seagrave telling her that it was only Tommy's nose which was bleeding.

In about half an hour Tommy had ceased crying, and his nose had left off bleeding; his face was washed, and then it was discovered that he had lost two front teeth, and that his cheek and lips were very much bruised. He was undressed and put to bed, and was soon fast asleep.

"I should not have left the muskets," said Ready to William; "it was my fault, but I thought Master Tommy had been told so often not to touch firearms, that he would not have dared to do so; but if there is mischief to be done, he is certain to find it out."

"He pointed it at me, and tried to shoot me," said Caroline; "but I ran away."

"Merciful heavens! what an escape!" cried Mrs. Seagrave.

"Had he pulled the trigger then, my dear child would have been killed. Naughty boy that he is."

"He has been well punished this time, madam; and I'll venture to say he will not touch a musket again in a hurry."

"Yes; but he must be punished more," said Mr. Seagrave; "he must remember it."

"Well, sir, if he is to be punished more, I think you cannot punish him better than by not allowing him to have any of the pig when it is cooked. Master Tommy is so fond of his dinner, that it will be the greatest punishment which you can inflict."

"I think so, too, Ready; and therefore that is a settled thing—no pig for Master Tommy."

After this conversation they had their supper, and went to bed.

CHAPTER XLV

Preparations—Departure—Chickens—Carrying Stores—The Letter—Nails and Cases.

THE next morning Master Tommy's face presented a very woeful appearance. His cheek and lips were swelled and black, and the loss of his two front teeth made him look much worse; fortunately, they were his first teeth, or it would have been of a more serious consequence.

Tommy looked very glum when he came to breakfast. But he had been very saucy to Juno, telling her that he had shot the pig, and would go out and shoot another, as soon as this one was eaten up.

There was the pig's fry for breakfast, and the smell of it had been very inviting to Tommy; but when his father scolded him

and told him that he was not to have one bit of the pig, he began to cry and roar so loud, that he was sent away from the tents till he had left off.

After breakfast, Ready proposed that he and William should take the boat and begin their labour of carrying the articles round from the cove to the bay where the house was, pointing out that there was not a day to be lost.

"But, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave, "how long do you intend to remain absent with William?"

"Why, madam, this is Wednesday; of course we shall be back on Saturday night. We must get the work done, and the sooner the better."

"My dear William, I cannot bear the idea of your being absent so long, and as you will be on the water every day. I shall be in a continual fright until I see you again."

"Well, mamma, I suppose I must write by the penny post, to let you know how I am."

"Don't laugh at me, William. I do wish there was a penny post, and that you could write every day."

Ready and William made every preparation for a continued absence. They took their blankets with them, and a small pot for cooking, and when all was prepared, they bade Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave farewell.

As they pushed off, William helped the dog into the boat.

"Why do you take the dog, Master William? He will be of use in keeping the pigs away, but of no use to us."

"Yes, he will, Ready; I must take him; for I have an idea come into my head, so let me have my own way."

"Well, Master William, you can always have your own way as far as I'm concerned; if you wish to take the dog, there is an end of the matter."

They hoisted the sail, and, as the breeze was fresh, were round to the bay in a very short time. They took their provisions and stores up to the house, and made fast the door, called the fowls, and gave them some of the damaged rice which Ready had brought round with him, and found, to their great delight, that they had now upwards of forty chickens, all healthy and doing well.

They then got into the boat again, and pulled away for the cove, the wind was fresh, and against them, so they had a long pull; but as Ready observed, it was much better that it should be so, as, when the boat was loaded, they could very quickly sail back again to the bay.

As soon as they arrived at the cove, they lost no time in loading

the boat; then they shoved off, hoisted their sail, and in an hour had regained the bay, and passed through the reef.

"I'm glad that this cargo has arrived safe, Master William, for it is very valuable to us. To-morrow, if we can, we will make two trips; do you think you can manage it, sir?"

"Oh yes; if we only start very early," replied William; "but now, let us have our dinner."

As they were eating their dinner, and William was giving the bones to the dog, Ready said, "Pray, Master William, what was the idea in your head which made you bring Remus with you?"

"I will tell you, Ready; I may be wrong, but I think I am not; I mean him to carry a letter to mamma; you know that he always goes back when he is ordered, and now I wish to see if he will not go back to the tents, if he is told. I have brought a piece of paper and pencil with me."

William then wrote on the paper:

"DEAR MAMMA,

"We are quite well, and just returned with the first cargo quite safe.

"Your affectionate Son,

"WILLIAM."

William tied the paper round the dog's neck with a piece of twine, and then calling him out of the house, said to him, "Remus, go back, sir—go back, sir." The dog looked wistfully at William, and then set off as fast as his legs could carry him through the cocoanut grove.

"He is gone, at all events," said William; "I think he will go home."

"We shall see, sir," replied Ready; "and now that we have finished our dinner, we will bring up the things."

CHAPTER XLVI

Dog Returns—Letter answered—Another Letter—Return to Tents—Conversation.

As soon as they had carried up the whole of the cargo, they secured the boat, and went up to the house to sleep. Just as they went in, Remus came bounding up to them with the letter round his neck.

"Here's the dog, Master William," said Ready; "he won't go home, after all."

"How provoking; I made sure he would go back; I really am disappointed. We will give him nothing to eat, and then he will; but dear me, Ready, this is not the paper I tied round his neck. I think not. Let me see." William took the paper, opened it, and read:

"DEAR WILLIAM,

"Your letter arrived safe, and we are glad you are well. Write every day, and God bless you: it was very clever of you and Remus.

"Your affectionate Mother,
"SELINA SEAGRAVE."

"Well, it is very clever," said Ready.

"Dear Remus, good dog," said William, caressing it; "nice, good dog: now I'll give you a good supper, for you deserve it."

"So he does, sir. Well, you've established a post on the island, which is a great improvement. Seriously, Master William, it may prove very useful."

"At all events, it will be a great comfort to my mother."

"Yes, sir; especially as we shall be obliged all three to be here when we fit up the storehouse, and make the proposed alterations. Now I think we had better go to bed, sir, for we must be up with the lark to-morrow, as they say in England."

"And here I suppose we must say, up with the parrots; for they are the only land birds on the island."

The next morning they were off before breakfast, and as the wind was not so fresh, they had not so hard a pull. The boat was soon loaded, and they returned under sail. They then breakfasted, and having left the things they had brought on the beach, that they might lose no time, they set off again, and returned with another cargo two hours before dusk; this they landed, and then secured the boat. As soon as they were in the house, William wrote on a piece of paper:

"DEAR MAMMA,

"We have brought round two cargoes to-day. All well, and very tired.—Yours,

"WILLIAM."

Remus did not require any teaching. William patted him, and said, "Good dog. Now, Remus, go back—go home, sir;" and the dog wagged his tail, and set off immediately.

Before they were in bed, the dog returned with the answer.

"How fast he must run, Ready; he has not been away more than two hours."

"No, sir. What does mamma say?"

"Only, 'All's well; won't detain your messenger.'

"So, now, Remus, you shall have plenty of supper, and plenty of patting and coaxing, for you are a clever good little dog."

The next day, as they had to take the two cargoes up to the house, they could only make one trip to the cove. The post was sent to the tents, and returned with the answer as before.

On Saturday they only made one trip, as they had to return to the tents, which they did by water, having first put a turtle into the boat; on their arrival, they found them all at the little harbour, waiting to receive them.

"Well, William dear, you did keep your promise and send me a letter by post," said Mrs. Seagrave. "How very delightful it is; I shall have no fear now when you are all away."

"I must teach Romulus and Vixen to do the same, mamma."

CHAPTER XLVII

Stores Removed—Last Trip—Conversation—Arrival at Harbour—Tommy.

ON the Monday morning, William and Ready went away in the boat, as before, to bring round the various articles from the cove. It had been arranged that they were not to return till the Saturday evening, and that the dog Remus was to bring intelligence of them and their welfare every afternoon. They worked hard during the week, and on Saturday they had completed their task; with the exception of a portion of the timbers of the ship, everything had been brought round, but had not been carried up to the storehouse, as that required more time.

On Saturday morning they went for the last time to the cove, and Ready selected some heavy oak timber out of the quantity which was lying on the beach, part of which they put into the boat, and the remainder they towed astern. It was a heavy load, and although the wind was fair to sail back again to the bay, the boat went but slowly through the water.

"Well, Master William," said Ready, "we have done a good week's work, and I must say it is high time that it is done; for the boat is in rather a crazy condition, and I must contrive to patch her up by and by, when there is time."

"We shall not want to use her very much after this, Ready," replied William, "a few trips round to the little harbour are all that will be required before we come back again to our old quarters."

"That's true, Master William; but she leaks very much, and at all events I'll give her a coat of pitch as soon as possible. For a slight-built little thing as she is, she has done hard duty."

"I suppose on Monday we shall set to at the storehouse, and alter it for our future residence?"

"Can't begin too soon, Master William," replied Ready; "don't doubt but Mr. Seagrave has finished the hedge and ditch round the yams by this time, and if so, I expect that madam will not like to be left in the tents alone with Juno and the children, and so we shall all move back to the house again until we have altered the storehouse; I must say that I would rather that your mamma should remain in the tents until all was finished."

"Because you are afraid of a visit from the savages, Ready?"

"I am, sir, and that's the truth."

"But, Ready, if they do come, we shall see them coming, and would it not be better that we should all be together, even if we are obliged to conceal ourselves in consequence of not being prepared? Suppose the savages were to overrun the island, and find my mother, my little brother and sister, defenceless, at the time we were obliged to retreat from our house; how dreadful that would be!"

"But, Master William, I counted upon retreating to the tents."

"So we can altogether, Ready, unless we are surprised in the night."

"That we must take care not to be. There's not three hours' dark in this season of the year. Well, Master William, I doubt not you may be right, and if they are all with us, Juno will be a great help, and we shall get through our work the faster."

"We had better let the question be decided by my father and mother."

"Very true, Master William; here's the point at last. We will haul the timber on the beach, and then be off as fast as we can, for it is getting late."

It was, indeed, much later than they had usually arrived at the little harbour, owing to the heavy load, which made the boat so long in coming round from the cove; and when they pulled in, they found Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave and the children all down, waiting for them.

"You are very late, William dear," said Mrs. Seagrave. "I was quite uneasy till I saw the boat in the distance."

"Yes, mamma; but we could not help it; we had a heavy load to bring round; and now our work is done."

"I am delighted to hear it, William, for I cannot bear your being away so long."

"And my work is done," said Mr. Seagrave; "the hedge and ditch were finished this morning."

"Well, then," observed Ready, "we must hold another council, but I presume it will not take very long."

"No; I expect not; it seldom does when people are of the same mind. Mrs. Seagrave won't be left here, Ready, and I don't want to leave her, so I presume on Monday we all start home again."

"Yes, sir, if you please," replied Ready.

"Juno, I hope you have a good supper," said William; "for I'm very hungry."

"Yes, Massa William; plenty fried fish. Massa catch 'em this morning."

"I like turtle-soup," said Tommy.

"I believe you like everything, Master Tommy," replied Ready, "except castor-oil beans. You won't eat any more of them."

"No, that I won't; but I'll eat the bananas when they are ripe."

"You would have eaten them before, if you could have reached them, I think; but you must grow a little taller first."

"I shall be a man by and by," said Tommy.

"I hope you will, and a good man too," replied old Ready; "but now I must help Juno in getting the supper under way."

CHAPTER XLVIII

Return to Bay—Stockade commenced—Arrangements—Lookout.

MONDAY morning was one of bustle; there was packing up and every preparation for departure. Juno was called here and called there, and was obliged to ask little Caroline to look after the kettle and call to her if it boiled over. Master Tommy, as usual, was in everyone's way, and doing more harm than good in his attempts to assist; but, however, as he meant well, nobody scolded him.

At last Ready, to get rid of him, sent him down with a large bundle to the beach. Tommy shouldered it with great importance, but when he came back, looking rather warm with the exertion, and Ready asked him to take down another, he said he was too tired, and sat down very quietly till breakfast-time before which everything was ready.

Mrs. Seagrave and Juno packed up the breakfast and dinner things in a basket after breakfast was over, and then Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave and the family set off on their journey, accompanied by the dogs, through the cocoanut grove. Little Albert could now walk very well, and only required to be occasionally carried by Juno, who led him by the hand. Caroline walked by her papa and mamma, and Master Tommy was too independent to walk with anyone.

William and Ready lost no time in getting through their work; the crockery, kitchen utensils, tables, and chairs were the first articles put into the boat. The goat was then led down, and they set off with a full load, and arrived at the bay long before the party who were walking through the wood. They landed the things on the beach, and then shoved off again to bring round the bedding, which was all that was left. By three o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at the bay with their second and last load, and found that the other party had been there about an hour, and Mr. Seagrave and Juno were very busy taking the articles up from the beach.

"Well, Master William," said Ready, "this is our last trip for some time, I expect; and so much the better, for our little boat must have something done to her as soon as I can find time."

"Yes, indeed, Ready, she has done her work well. Do you know, I feel as if I were coming home, now that we are back to the bay. I little thought that I ever should consider any part of this island as my home. I really feel quite glad that we have left the tents. I found the pigeons among the peas, Ready; so we must pick them as soon as we can. They have increased very much; I think there were near twenty of them. We shall have pigeon-pies next year, I expect," replied William.

"If it pleases God that we live and do well," replied Ready, who had his eyes fixed upon the sea.

Before night everything was in its place again in the house, and as comfortable as before, and as they were very tired, they went very early to bed, having first arranged what they should do in the morning. Mrs. Seagrave said that she could attend to the cookery and the children, and that Juno was at their service, if they required her. At daylight, Ready and William went down to the turtle-pond and speared a turtle, for now the time was coming on for turning the turtle again, and the pond would soon be filled. Having cut it up and put a portion of it into the pot, all ready for Mrs. Seagrave, as soon as breakfast was over, they proceeded to the storehouse in the grove.

After a little consultation with Mr. Seagrave, Ready marked out a square of cocoanut trees surrounding the storehouse, so as to leave a space within them of about twenty yards each side, which they considered large enough for the enclosure. These cocoanut trees were to serve as the posts, between which were to be fixed other cocoanut trees cut down, and about fourteen feet high, so as to form a palisade or stockade which could not be climbed over, and would protect them from any attack of the savages.

As soon as the line of trees had been marked out, they set to work cutting down all the trees within the line, and then outside to a distance of ten yards, so as to give them room for their work. Ready cut out cross-pieces, to nail from tree to tree, and now they found the advantage of having saved so many of the large spike nails, without which they never could have made so good or so quick a job of it. Mr. Seagrave cut down trees, William and Juno sawed them off at a proper length with one of the cross-cut saws, and then carried them to Ready. They soon had more cut out than he could use, and then they dragged away the tops and branches, and piled them at a distance on the ground, to use as winter fuel, while Mr. Seagrave helped Ready in fixing up the palisades. They worked very hard that day, and were not sorry to go to bed. Ready, however, took an opportunity to speak to William.

"I think, sir," said he, "that now we are here again, it will be necessary to keep a sort of night-watch, in case of accident. I shall not go to bed till it is quite dark, which it will be by nine o'clock, and shall have my glass to examine the offing the last thing. You see, sir, there is little fear of the savages coming here in the night-time, but they may just before night, or very early in the morning, so one of us must be up again before daybreak, that is, between two and three o'clock in the morning, to see if there is anything to be seen of them: if there is not, of course we may go to bed again, as they cannot arrive till many hours afterwards; and we must watch the wind and the weather, if it is favourable for them to come to us, which, indeed, the wind will not be except at the commencement of the rainy season; but it may be very light, and then they would not care for its being against them. I've been thinking of it, Master William, a great deal, and my idea is, that it will be at the beginning of the rainy season that we shall have a visit, if we have one at all; for you see that the wind don't blow regular from one quarter, as it does now, but is variable, and then they can make sail in their canoes, and and come here easily, instead of pulling between thirty and forty

miles, which is hard work against wind and current. Still, Master William, we must not be careless, and we must keep a good lookout even now. I don't want to fret your father and Mrs. Seagrave with my fears on the subject, but I tell you what I really think, and what we ought to do."

"I agree with you, Ready, and I will take care to be up before daybreak, and examine very carefully with the spyglass as soon as the day dawns. You take the night part, and I will do the morning part of the watching."

"Very well, Master William; for the matter of that, I could do both myself, but I think if you were to get up in the morning they would not notice it so much; as for my staying out at night, that they are accustomed to."

After this conversation, they separated, and from that time forward William and Ready were continually on the lookout, from dawn of day till it was too dark to distinguish anything.

CHAPTER XLIX

Tommy missing—Ready in the Water—Ready's Danger—Boat sinking—Ready and Tommy saved—Ready and William—Thanksgivings.

FOR nearly a fortnight the work upon the stockade continued without any intermission, when a circumstance occurred which created the greatest alarm and excitement. One day, as the party returned to dinner, Mrs. Seagrave said with surprise, "Why, was not Tommy with you?"

"No," replied Mr. Seagrave; "he has not been near us all day; he went with us after breakfast, but did not remain a quarter of an hour."

"No, missy; I tell Massa Tommy to help carry cocoanut leaves, and then he go away directly."

"Goodness! where can he be?" exclaimed Mrs. Seagrave, alarmed.

"I daresay he is picking up shells on the beach, ma'am," replied Ready; "or perhaps he is in the garden. I will go and see."

"I will go with you, Ready," said William.

"I see him—oh, mercy!—I see him," said Juno, pointing with her finger; "he is in the boat, and boat go to sea."

It was but too true: there was Tommy in the boat and the boat had drifted from the beach, and was now a cable's length away away from it, among the breakers of the reef.

William ran off like the wind, followed close by Mr. Seagrave and Ready, and at a distance by Mrs. Seagrave and Juno, the former dreadfully alarmed; indeed there was no time to be lost, for the wind was off the shore, and in a short time the boat would have been out to sea.

William, as soon as he arrived at the beach, threw off his hat and jacket, and dashed into the water. He was already up to his middle, when old Ready, who had followed him, caught him by the arm and said—

“Master William, go back immediately. I insist upon it. Your going can do no good, as you do not understand the thing so well as I do; and go I will; so there will be double risk for nothing. Mr. Seagrave, order him back. He will obey you. I insist upon it, sir.”

“William,” said Mr. Seagrave, “come back immediately, I command you.”

William obeyed; but before he was clear of the water old Ready had swum across to the first rocks on the reef, and was now dashing through the pools between the rocks towards the boat.

“Oh, father,” said William, “if that good old man is lost, I shall never forgive myself. I almost feel as if I did wrong to obey you. Look, father, one—two—three sharks, here close to us. He has no chance. See he is again in deep water. God protect him!—O God! hear my prayer.”

In the meantime, Mr. Seagrave, whose wife was now by his side, and who was shuddering at the scene, after glancing his eye a moment at the sharks, which were within a few feet of the beach, had kept his gaze steadily upon Ready’s movements. If he passed through the passage of deep water between the rocks, he might be considered safe, as the boat was now beating on a reef on the other side, where the water was shallow. It was a moment of intense anxiety. At last Ready had gained the reef, and had his hands upon the rocks, and was climbing on them.

“He is safe, is he not?” whispered Mrs. Seagrave faintly.

“Yes, now I think he is,” replied Mr. Seagrave, as Ready gained a footing on the rocks, where the water was but a little above his ankles. “I think there is no deep water between him and the boat.”

In another minute Ready was over the rocks and had seized the gunnel of the boat.

“He is in the boat,” cried William. “Thank God!”

“Yes; we must thank God, and that fervently,” replied Mr. Seagrave. “Look at those monsters,” continued he pointing to the

sharks; "how quick they swim to and fro: they have scented their prey on the water. William, it is fortunate they are here: they might have been out there, when Ready passed through the deep water."

"Yes, indeed, papa. See, he has the boat-hook, and is pushing the boat off the reef into the deep water. Oh, he is quite safe now."

Such, however, was not the case. The boat had been beating on the rocks of the reef, and had knocked a hole in her bottom, and as soon as Ready had forced the boat into deep water, she began to fill immediately. Ready pushed as hard as he could with the boat-hook, and tearing off his neckcloth, forced as much as he could of it into the hole. This saved them; but the boat was up to the thwarts with water, and the least motion on the part of Ready, or even Tommy, would have upset her immediately, and they had still to pass the deep water between the reef and the beach, where the sharks were swimming. Ready, who perceived his danger, called out to them to throw large stones at the sharks as fast as they could, to drive them away. This was immediately done by Mr. Seagrave and William, aided by Juno and Mrs. Seagrave, who found courage in this present instance.

The pelting of the stones had the desired effect. The sharks swam away, and Ready passed through to the beach, and the boat grounded just as she was up to the gunnel in water, and about to turn over. He handed out Master Tommy, who was so dreadfully frightened, that he could not cry, but remained as pale as a sheet, and his mouth and eyes wide open.

As soon as Ready landed, William sprang into his arms, crying, "Thank God you are safe, Ready." Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave each took his hand and shook it heartily. At last, Mrs. Seagrave, over-powered by her feelings, sank her head upon William's shoulder, and burst into tears. Juno, after smiling at Ready, took Tommy by the hand, and led him away, saying, "Come along, you nasty, naughty boy. You get fine whipping to-night, soon as all the work is over." Whereupon Tommy set up a miserable howling, which he never left off until long after he was in the house.

"It was touch and go, Master William," observed Ready, as they walked up to the house, preceded by Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave. "How much mischief may be created by a thoughtless boy! However, one can't put old heads on young shoulders, and so Master Tommy must be forgiven."

"He has been punished enough, as far as fright goes," replied William; "I'll answer for it, he'll never get into the boat again by himself."

"No, I think not; but now, Master William, you saw how nearly I was swamped in the boat; indeed, it was only by His mercy that I was preserved; but taking the question merely as far as our endeavours could help us, do you think that if you had gained the boat instead of me, you would have brought her to the beach as I did?"

"No, Ready; for I never should have thought of taking off, my neckcloth to put into the hole, I'm afraid; but even if I had, I never could have managed her so skilfully as you did, and therefore I must have been swamped before I got on shore."

"Well, Master William, I am an old sailor and you are not, therefore it is not vanity which makes me say that you could not have managed the boat so well as I did. Now, as I had not three or four seconds to spare, you, as you say, must have been swamped. I mention this to prove to you that I was right in desiring your father to order you back."

"Certainly, Ready; but Tommy is my brother, and I felt that it was more my duty than yours to risk my life for him."

"A very proper feeling, Master William; but you have other duties, which are to look after your father and mother, and be a comfort and solace to them. Your life is more valuable than mine. I am an old man on the brink of the grave, and a year or two makes no difference; but your life is, I hope, of more consequence. What would have been the agony and distress, and, I may say, continual source of future regret to your parents, had you perished before their eyes by so horrible a death! They never would have smiled again."

"And do you not think that their regret would have been as great, if you had perished in the same way?"

"Here we are at the house, so let us say no more about it."

That evening the prayers were more than usually solemn, and the thanksgivings more heartfelt and sincere. Exhausted with the exciting scene of the day, they all retired early to bed.

CHAPTER L

Stockade complete—House finished—Water-cask—Consultation—Go into Stockade—Arrangements—Turn Turtle.

WHEN Tommy was questioned on the following morning as to his inducement to get into the boat, to their great surprise he replied that he wanted to go round to the tents again to see if the

bananas were ripe; that he intended to eat some of them and be back before dinnertime, that he might not be found out.

"I suspect, Master Tommy, you would have been very hungry before you ate any bananas if we had not perceived you," said Ready.

"I won't go into the boat any more," said Tommy.

"I rather think you will keep to that resolution, Tommy," replied Mr. Seagrave; "however, I must leave your mother to point out to you the danger you were in yourself and in which you placed others by your folly. It is time for us to go to work."

The stockade was now almost finished; the door was the occasion of a good deal of consultation; at last it was agreed that it would be better to have a door of stout oak plank, but with second door-posts inside, about a foot apart from the door, between which could be inserted short poles one above the other, so as to barricade it within when required. This would make the door as strong as any other portion of the stockade. As soon as this was all complete, the storehouse was to be altered for a dwelling-house, by taking away the wattles of cocoanut boughs on the sides, and filling them up with logs of cocoanut trees.

Before the week was ended, the stockade and door were complete, and they now began to fell trees, to form the sides of the house. This was rapid work; and while Mr. Seagrave, William, and Juno felled the trees, and brought them on the wheels to the side of the stockade, all ready cut to their proper lengths, Ready was employed in flooring the house with a part of the deal planks which they had brought round from the cove. But this week they were obliged to break off for two days, to collect all their crops from the garden: as soon as this was done, they again set to work.

A fortnight more passed away in continual hard work, but the house was at last finished, and very complete, compared to the one they were residing in. It was much larger, and divided into three rooms by the deal planking: the middle room which the door opened into was the sitting and eating-room, with a window behind: the two side-rooms were sleeping-rooms, one for Mrs. Seagrave and the children, and the other for the male portion of the family. This made it much more comfortable and complete.

"See, Master William," said Ready, when they were alone, "what we have been able to do by means of those deal planks; why, to have floored this house, and run up the partitions, would have taken us half a year, if we had had to saw the wood."

"Yes, and what a comfort it is to have so many shelves about. When shall we shift into this house?"

"The sooner the better, Master William. We have plenty of work still to do, but we can work outside of the stockade."

"And what do you propose to do with the old house?" said William.

"We had better put some of our stores of least value in it for the present, until we can fit up another storehouse inside the stockade."

"Then we'll put those casks in, for they take up a great deal of room."

"All but that large one, Master William; we shall want that; I shall fix it up in a corner."

"What for, Ready?"

"To put water in, Master William."

"But we are closer to the spring than we were at the other house."

"I know that; but, perhaps, we may not be able to go out of the stockade, and then we shall want water."

"I understand, Ready; how thoughtful you are."

"If at my age I did not think a little, Master William, it would be very odd. You don't know how anxious I am to see them all inside this defence, William. I shall not be happy until they are."

"But why should we not come in, Ready?"

"Why, sir, as there is still plenty of work, I do not like to press the matter, lest your mamma should be fidgeted, and think there was danger; but, Master William, danger there is; I have a kind of forewarning of it. It weighs on my mind, and I can't shake it off. I wish you would propose that they should come in at once; the standing bedplaces are all ready, except the canvas, and I shall nail on new by to-night."

In consequence of this conversation, William proposed at dinner-time that the next day they should go into the new house, as it was so much more handy to work there and live there at the same time. Mr. Seagrave was of the same opinion, but Mrs. Seagrave thought it better that everything should be tidy first.

"Why, ma'am," said Ready, "the only way to get things tidy is to go yourself, and make them so. Nothing will ever be in its place unless you are there to put it in."

"Well, Ready," said Mrs. Seagrave, "since you are against me as well as all the rest, I give up, and if you please we will shift over to-morrow."

"Indeed, ma'am, I think it will be better; this is the last

month of fine weather, and we shall have plenty to do. We shall get on much faster if we go there."

"Be it so, Ready; you are the best judge; to-morrow we will take up our quarters in the stockade."

"Thank God!" muttered old Ready very softly. William only, who was next to him, heard what he said.

The next day was fully employed in changing their residence, and shifting over the bedding and utensils; and that night they slept within the stockade. Ready had run up a very neat little outhouse of plank, as a kitchen for Juno, and another week was fully employed as follows: the stores were divided; those of least consequence, and the salt provisions, flour, and the garden produce, etc., were put into the old house; the casks of powder and most of the cartridges were also put there for security; but a cask of beef or pork, and flour, all the iron-work and nails, canvas, etc., were stowed away for the present under the new house, which had, when built as a storehouse, been raised four feet from the ground to make a shelter for the stock. This was very spacious, and, of course, quite dry, and contained all they wished to put in. Ready also took care, by degrees, to fill the large water-butt full of water, and had fixed into the bottom a spigot for drawing the water off.

"Well, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready on the Saturday, "we have done a good many hard weeks' work lately; but this is the last of them. We are now comfortably settled in our new house: our stores are all under cover and safe from the weather, and so we may now take things a little easier. William and I must go and turn some turtle if we can, for the season is getting late for them, and I must repair the boat, so that we may take a trip round to examine how the stock and yams get on."

"And the bananas and the guavas," said Tommy.

"Why, we have quite forgotten all about them," observed Mrs. Seagrave.

"Yes, ma'am; we have been so busy, that it is no wonder; however, there may be some left yet, and I will go round as soon as the boat is able to swim, and bring all I can find."

"We must put our seeds and potatoes in before the rainy season, Ready."

"It will be better, sir, if we can find time, as we shall not have much more fine weather now; at all events, we can get them in at intervals when the weather is fine; now I shall go my rounds for turtle. Good-night, ma'am—good-night, sir. Come, Master William."

William and Ready went down to the beach, but meeting Juno

coming from the kitchen, Ready desired her to collect as much fuel as she could, and stack it up in a corner inside of the stockade, as it would be more handy.

"Yes, Massa Ready," replied Juno; "I understand; nothing like being all ready case of accident."

"Exactly so, Juno," replied William. "Good-night."

William and Ready succeeded in turning six more turtles to add to their stock, and having taken a careful survey with the telescope, they came back, fastened the door of the stockade, and went to bed.

CHAPTER LI

Washing—Yams—Looking out—Canoes under Sail—Arrangements—Conversation—Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave.

ANOTHER week passed away, during which Ready repaired the boat, and William and Mr. Seagrave were employed in digging up the garden. It was also a very busy week at the house, as they had not washed linen for some time. Mrs. Seagrave and Juno, and even little Caroline, were hard at work, and Master Tommy was more useful than ever he had been, going for the water as they required it, and watching little Albert. Indeed, he was so active, that Mrs. Seagrave praised him before his papa, and Master Tomray was quite proud.

On the Monday, William and Ready set off in the boat to the little harbour, and found all the stock doing well, and promising to increase. Many of the bananas and guavas had ripened and withered, but there were enough left to fill the boat half full. The yams had not been broken in upon by the pigs, and the tents were in good order.

"We cannot do better than to leave the stock where it is at present, Master William; they can run into the cocoanut grove for shelter if there is a storm, and there is feed enough for ten times as many."

"I think so too."

"But in a few days we must come round again for the tents; we must not leave them here the whole rainy season. Now, sir, shall we go back?"

"Yes; at all events, Tommy will be delighted with our cargo. But will you not dig up a few yams first?"

"I had quite forgotten it, Master William. I will go for the spade; we left one in the nearest tent."

Having procured the yams, they set off on their return. Before they arrived at the bay, the sky clouded over, and threatened a storm. It did not, however, rain till after they had landed, when a smart shower announced the commencement of the rainy season. The fruit was very welcome to all of them, it was so long since they had tasted any; but Tommy was ravenous to obtain it; he could not eat it fast enough to please himself, and Mr. Seagrave was compelled to prevent him from eating any more.

The following day was beautifully fine, and everything appeared refreshed by the rain which had fallen. It was, however, agreed that Ready and William should go round the next morning, bring home the tents, and as many yams as the boat could carry. William and Ready went out at night as usual, when Ready observed that the wind had chopped round to the eastward.

"That will be bad for us to-morrow, Ready," replied William. "We may sail to the harbour, but we shall have to pull back with the loaded boat."

"I trust it will be no worse than that, at all events," replied Ready; "but we must now return, and go to bed. I shall be up by daylight, so you need not wake without you like."

"I can't help waking," replied William, "and I shall, therefore, be up with you."

"Very well, sir, I am always glad of your company."

The next morning, just before the day dawned, Ready and William unfastened the door of the stockade, and went down to the beach. The wind was still to the eastward, and blowing rather fresh, and the sky was cloudy. As the sun rose, Ready, as usual, had his telescope with him, and looked through it at the offing to the eastward. As he kept the spyglass to his eye for some time without speaking, William said—

"Do you see anything, Ready, that you look so long in that direction?"

"Either my old eyes deceive me, or I fear that I do," replied Ready; "but a few minutes more will decide."

There was a bank of clouds on the horizon to the eastward; but as soon as the sun had risen above them, Ready, who had the telescope fixed in the same direction, said—

"Yes, Master William, I am right. I thought that those dark patches I saw were their brown grass sails."

"Sails of what, Ready?" said William hastily.

"Of the Indian canoes, Master William: I knew that they would come. Take the glass, and look yourself, Master William; my eye is quite dim from straining it so long."

"Yes, I have them now," replied William, with his eye to the glass; he at last said—

"Why, there are twenty or thirty of them, Ready at least."

"And each with twenty or thirty men in them too, Master William."

"Good Heaven! What must we do, Ready? How frightened my poor mother will be! I'm afraid we can do nothing against such a number."

"Yes, William, we can do a great deal, and we must do a great deal. That there are hundreds of savages, there is no doubt; but recollect that we have a stockade, which they cannot climb easily over, and plenty of firearms and ammunition, so that we can make a good fight of it, and perhaps beat them off, for they have nothing but clubs and spears."

"How fast they come down, Ready! why, they will be here in an hour."

"No, sir, nor in two hours either; those are very large canoes. However, there is no time to be lost. While I watch them for a few minutes till I make them more clearly out, do you run up to the house and beckon your father to come down to me; and then, Master William, get all the muskets ready, and bring the casks of powder and of made-up cartridges from the old house into the stockade. Call Juno, and she will help you. We shall have time enough to do everything. After you have done that, you had better come down and join us."

In a few minutes after William ran up to the house, Mr. Seagrave made his appearance.

"Ready, there is danger, I'm sure; William would not tell me, I presume, because he was afraid of alarming his mother. What is it?"

"It is, Mr. Seagrave, that the savages are now coming down upon us in large force; perhaps five or six hundred of them; and that we shall have to defend ourselves with all our might and main."

"Do you think we have any chance against such a force?"

"Yes, sir; with God's help I have no doubt but that we shall beat them off; but we must fight hard, and for some days, I fear."

Mr. Seagrave examined the fleet of canoes with the glass. "It is, indeed, dreadful odds to contend against."

"Yes, sir; but three muskets behind a stockade are almost a match for all their clubs and spears, provided none of us are wounded."

"Well, Ready, we must put our trust in the Lord, and do our

best; I will second you to the utmost of my power, and William, I'm sure, will do his duty. I have, indeed, much to fight for, a wife and family; but you, Ready, have no such ties."

"No, sir; but I shall fight for my life, which although not worth much, I do not wish to lose by their hands; and I shall fight for you and the family too, sir, for I am attached to you all, and there's an end of the business. I think, sir, we had better not wait here any more, as we have not long to prepare for them. We have only to fix up some of our strong deal planks on the inside of the stockade for us to stand upon when we are attacked, that we may see what the enemy is about, and be able to fire upon them. But first we had better go to the old house, and take out what provisions and other articles we shall most want, and roll the casks into the stockade, for to the old house they will go first, and perhaps destroy everything in it. The casks they certainly will, for the sake of the iron hoops. An hour's work will do a great deal, for the distance is not very great. I believe we have everything we want in the stockade; Juno has her fuel, the large butt of water will last us two or three weeks at least, and if we have time, we will get the wheels down, and spear a couple of turtles for fresh provisions."

"We hardly need think of turtle just now, Ready."

"Why not, sir? It's as well to have them as to leave them for the savages to eat for us. I will get all up I can, even if we do not eat them; they will live for weeks on their back in the shade."

This conversation passed as they walked up to the house. As soon as they arrived, they found William and Juno had just brought in the powder and cartridges. Mr. Seagrave went in to break the matter to his wife, who, he feared, would be much alarmed.

"I was told that I had to expect this, my dear," replied Mrs. Seagrave, "so that it has not come upon me altogether unawares; and anything that a poor weak woman can do, I will. I feel that I have no want of courage to defend my children."

"I am indeed greatly relieved," said Mr. Seagrave, "by finding you thus prepared and supported. I shall feel no anxiety—but we have work to be done."

"Then I must help, my dear Seagrave; and what I want in strength, I must make up in energy."

Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave then joined William, Ready, and Juno, who had already proceeded to the old house. The children were all still in bed and asleep, so that there was no occasion for anyone to watch them.

CHAPTER LII

Preparations—All prepared—Savages land—Retreat to Stockade.

As they could have a very good view of the canoes from where the old house stood, Ready examined them with his glass every time that he returned from rolling up a cask to the stockade. Everyone worked hard; even Mrs. Seagrave did all she could, either assisting in rolling the casks, or carrying up what she was able to lift. In an hour they had got into the stockade all that they most cared for, and the canoes were still about six or seven miles off.

"We have a good hour before they arrive, sir," said Ready, "and even then the reefs will puzzle them not a little; I doubt if they are disembarked under two hours. We have plenty of time for all we wish to do. Juno, go for the wheels, and, William, come down with the spear, and we will have some of the turtle into the stockade. Mr. Seagrave, I do not require your assistance, so if you will have the kindness to get out the muskets, and examine the flints, it will be as well."

"Yes, and then you have to load them," replied Mrs. Seagrave. "Juno and I can do that, at all events, ready for you to fire them."

"An excellent idea, madam," replied Ready; "and you will really be of service."

In half an hour six turtles were brought up by Juno and William, and then Ready followed them into the stockade. "I don't see the goat, Master William," said Ready; "but as we have no food for her, I think we may as well leave her out; she will run away when she sees such strange creatures as these savages."

They then rolled the casks and upheaded them by the sides of the stockade, and fixed up deal planks to stand upon, just high enough to enable them to see over the top of the palisades, and to fire at the enemy. Mrs. Seagrave had been shown how to load a musket, and Juno was now taught the same.

"Now, sir, we are all prepared," said old Ready, "and madam and Juno can go and look a little after the children, and get breakfast."

"Breakfast all ready. Kettle boil long time," said Juno.

As soon as the children were dressed, Mr. Seagrave called Ready, who was outside watching the canoes, and they went to

their morning devotions and prayed heartily for succour in this time of need. They then breakfasted in haste; for, as may be supposed, they were almost too anxious to eat. Mrs. Seagrave pressed her children in her arms, but kept up her spirits wonderfully.

"This suspense is worse than all," said she at last. "I wish now that they were come."

"Shall I go to Ready and hear his report, my dear? I will not be away three minutes."

In a short time Mr. Seagrave returned, saying that the canoes were close to the beach, that the savages evidently had a knowledge of the passages through the reefs, as they had steered right in, and had lowered their sails; that Ready and William were on the lookout, but concealed behind the cocoanut trees.

"I hope they will not stay out too long."

"No fear of that, my dear Selina; but they had better watch their motions to the last minute."

During this conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave within the stockade, William and Ready were watching the motions of the savages, a large portion of whom had landed out of ten of the canoes, and the others were following their example as fast as they could, forcing their way through the reefs. The savages were all painted, with their war-cloaks and feathers on, and armed with spears and clubs evidently having come with no peaceable intentions. At first they occupied themselves with beaching the canoes, and as they were very large and heavy, this was the work of some few minutes employment for the whole of them.

William, who had taken the telescope to examine them more minutely, said to Ready, "What a fierce, cruel set of wretches they appear to be; if they overpower us, they will certainly kill us."

"Of that there is no doubt, Master William; but we must fight hard, and not let them overpower us. Kill us they certainly will, and I am not sure that they may not eat us afterwards; but that is of little consequence."

William shuddered at the idea, and then replied in a determined tone, "I'll fight as long as I have breath in my body; but, Ready, they are coming up as fast as they can."

"Yes, sir; right up to the old house; we must wait no longer. Come, Master William."

"I thought I saw another vessel under sail, out away by the garden point, Ready, just as we turned away."

"Very likely, sir, a canoe which has separated from the others during the night. Come, quick, Master William, they have begun to yell."

Another half minute, and they arrived at the door of the stockade; they entered, shut the door, and then barricaded it with the cocoanut poles which they had fitted to the inner doorposts.

"That is secure enough," observed Ready, "and now we must trust in Heaven and our own exertions."

CHAPTER LIII

Savages approach—Attack—Retire—Council of Savages—Water all gone—Discussion—Want of Water.

THE loud yells of the savages struck terror into the heart of Mrs Seagrave; it was well that she had not seen their painted bodies and fierce appearance, or she would have been much more alarmed. Little Albert and Caroline clung round her neck with terror in their faces; they did not cry, but looked round and round to see from whence the horrid noise proceeded, and then clung faster to their mother. Master Tommy was very busy finishing all the breakfast which had been left, for there was no one to check him as usual; Juno was busy outside, and was very active and courageous. Mr. Seagrave had been employed making the holes between the palisades large enough to admit the barrels of the muskets, so that they could fire at the savages without being exposed; while William and Ready, with their muskets loaded, were on the lookout for their approach.

"They are busy with the old house just now, sir," observed Ready; "but that won't detain them long."

"Here they come," replied William; "and look, Ready, is not that one of the women who escaped from us in the canoe, who is walking along with the first two men? Yes, it is, I am sure."

"You are right, Master William, it is one of them. Ah! they have stopped; they did not expect the stockade, that is clear, and it has puzzled them; see how they are all crowding together and talking; they are holding a council of war how to proceed; that tall man must be one of their chiefs. Now, Master William, Although I intend to fight as hard as I can, yet I always feel a dislike to begin first; I shall therefore show myself over the

palisades, and if they attack me, I shall then fire with a quiet conscience."

"But take care they don't hit you, Ready."

"No great fear of that, Master William. Here they come."

Ready now stood upon the plank within, so as to show himself to the savages, who gave a tremendous yell, and, as they advanced, a dozen spears were thrown at him with so true an aim that, had he not instantly dodged behind the stockade, he must have been killed. Three or four spears remained quivering in the palisades, just below the top; the others went over it, and fell down inside of the stockade, at the farther end.

"Now, Master William, take good aim;" but before William could fire, Mr. Seagrave, who had agreed to be stationed at the corner so that he might see if the savages went round to the other side, fired his musket and the tall chief fell to the ground.

Ready and William also fired, and two more of the savages were seen to drop, amidst the yells of their companions.

The spears now rushed through the air, and it was well that they could fire from the stockade without exposing their persons, or they would have had but little chance. The yells increased, and the savages now began to attack on every quarter; the most active, who climbed like cats, actually succeeded in gaining the top of the palisades, but, as soon as their heads appeared above, they were fired at with so true an aim that they dropped down dead outside. This combat lasted for more than an hour, when the savages, having lost a great many men, drew off from the assault, and the parties within the stockade had time to breathe.

"They have not gained much in this bout, at all events," said Ready.

"Do you think they will go away now?" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Oh no, madam, not yet; they will try us every way before they leave us. You see these are very brave men, and it is clear that they know what gunpowder is, or they would have been more astonished."

"Are they all gone, Ready?" said William, who had come down from the plank to his mother.

"No, sir; I see them between the trees now; they are sitting round in a circle, and, I suppose, making speeches: it is the custom of these people."

"Well, I'm very thirsty, at all events," said William; "Juno, bring me a little water."

Juno went to the water-tub, to comply with William's request, and in a few minutes afterwards came back in great consternation.

"Oh, massa! oh, missy! no water; water all gone."

"Water all gone!" cried Ready and all of them in a breath.

"Yes; not one little drop in the cask."

"I filled it up to the top!" exclaimed Ready very gravely; "the tub did not leak, that I am sure of; how can this have happened?"

"Missy, I think I know now," said Juno; "you remember you send Massa Tommy, the two or three days we wash, to fetch water from well in little bucket. You know how soon he came back, and how you say what good boy he was, and how you tell Massa Seagrave when he come to dinner. Now, missy, I quite certain Massa Tommy no take trouble go to well, but fetch water from tub all the while, and so he empty it."

"I'm afraid you're right, Juno," replied Mrs. Seagrave.
"What shall we do?"

"I go speak Massa Tommy," said Juno, running to the house.

"This is a very awkward thing, Mr. Seagrave," observed Ready gravely.

Mr. Seagrave shook his head.

The fact was, that they all perceived the danger of their position: if the savages did not leave the island, they would perish of thirst or have to surrender; and in the latter case, all their lives would most certainly be sacrificed.

Juno now returned: her suspicions were but too true. Tommy, pleased with the praise of being so quick in bringing the water, had taken out the spigot of the cask, and drawn it all off. He was now crying, and promising not to take the water again.

"His promises come too late," observed Mr. Seagrave; "well, it is the will of Heaven that all our careful arrangements and preparations against this attack should be defeated by the idleness of a child, and we must submit."

"Very true, sir," replied Ready; "all our hopes now are that the savages may be tired out, and leave the island."

"If I had but a little for the children, I should not care," observed Mrs. Seagrave; "but to see those poor things suffer—is there not a drop left, Juno, anywhere?"

Juno shook her head. "All gone, missy; none nowhere."

Mrs. Seagrave said she would go and examine, and went away into the house, accompanied by Juno.

"This is a very bad business, Ready," observed Mr. Seagrave. "What would we give for a shower of rain now, that we might catch the falling drops?"

"There are no signs of it, sir," replied Ready; "we must

however, put our confidence in One who will not forsake us."

"I wish the savages would come on again," observed William; "for the sooner they come, the sooner the affair will be decided."

"I doubt if they will to-day, sir; at night-time I think it very probable, and I fear the night attack more than the day. We must make preparations for it."

"Why, what can we do, Ready?"

"In the first place, sir, by nailing planks from cocoanut tree to cocoanut tree above the present stockade, we may make a great portion of it much higher, and more difficult to climb over. Some of them were nearly in this time. If we do that, we shall not have so large a space to watch over and defend; and then we must contrive to have a large fire ready for lighting, that we may not have to fight altogether in the dark. It will give them some advantage in looking through the palisades, and seeing where we are, but they cannot well drive their spears through, so it is no great matter. We must make the fire in the centre of the stockade, and have plenty of tar in it, to make it burn bright, and we must not, of course, light it until after we are attacked. We shall then see where they are trying for an entrance, and where to aim with our muskets."

"The idea is very good, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave; "if it had not been for this unfortunate want of water, I really should be sanguine of beating them off."

"We may suffer very much, Mr. Seagrave, I have no doubt; but who knows what the morrow may bring forth?"

"True, Ready. Do you see the savages now?"

"No, sir; they have left the spot where they were in consultation, and I do not even hear them; I suppose they are busy with their wounded and their dead."

As Ready had supposed, no further attack was made by the savages on that day, and he, William, and Mr. Seagrave were very busy making their arrangements; they nailed the planks on the trunks of the trees above the stockade, so as to make three sides of the stockade at least five feet higher, and almost impossible to climb up; and they prepared a large fire in a tar-barrel full of cocoanut leaves mixed with wood and tar, so as to burn fiercely. Dinner or supper they had none, for there was nothing but salt pork and beef and live turtle, and, by Ready's advice, they did not eat, as it would only increase their desire to drink.

The poor children suffered much; little Albert wailed and

cried for "water, water"; Caroline knew that there was none, and was quiet, poor little girl, although she suffered much; as for Tommy, the author of all this misery, he was the most impatient, and roared for some time, till William, quite angry at his behaviour, gave him a smart box on the ear, and he reduced his roar to a whimper, from fear of receiving another. Ready remained on the lookout; indeed, everything was so miserable inside of the house, that they were all glad to go out of it; they could do no good, and poor Mrs. Seagrave had a difficult and most painful task to keep the children quiet under such severe privation, for the weather was still very warm and sultry.

CHAPTER LIV

Second Attack—Savages retire—Proposed Defence—Thirst increases—Discussion—Thoughts—Conversation—Lookout.

BUT the moaning of the children was very soon after dusk drowned by the yells of the savages, who, as Ready had prognosticated, now advanced to the night attack.

Every part of the stockade was at once assailed, and their attempts now made were to climb into it; a few spears were occasionally thrown, but it was evident that the object was to obtain an entrance by dint of numbers. It was well that Ready had taken the precaution of nailing the deal planks above the original stockade, or there is little doubt but that the savages would have gained their object; as it was, before the flames of the fire, which Juno had lighted by Ready's order, gave them sufficient light, three or four savages had climbed up and had been shot by William and Mr. Seagrave, as they were on the top of the stockade.

When the fire burnt brightly, the savages outside were more easily aimed at, and a great many fell in their attempts to get over. The attack continued more than an hour, when at last, satisfied that they could not succeed, the savages once more withdrew, carrying with them, as before, their dead and wounded.

"I trust that they will now re-embark, and leave the island," said Mr. Seagrave to Ready.

"I only wish they may, sir; it is not at all impossible; but there is no saying. I have been thinking, Mr. Seagrave, that we might be able to ascertain their movements, by making a lookout. You see, sir, that cocoanut tree," continued Ready, pointing to

one of those to which the palisades were fastened, "is much taller than any of the others; now, by driving spike-nails into the trunk at about a foot apart, we might ascend it with ease, and it would command a view of the whole bay; we then could know what the enemy were about."

"Yes, that is very true; but will not any one be very much exposed if he climbs up?"

"No, sir, for you see the cocoanut trees are cut down clear of the palisades to such a distance, that no savage could come at all near without being seen by anyone on the lookout, and giving us sufficient time to get down again before he could use his spear.

"I believe that you are right there, Ready; but at all events, I would not attempt to do it before daylight, as there may be some of them still lurking underneath the stockade."

"Certainly, there may be, sir, and therefore, until daylight, we will not begin. Fortunately, we have plenty of spike-nails left."

Mr. Seagrave then went into the house; Ready desired William to lie down and sleep for two or three hours, as he would watch. In the morning, when Mr. Seagrave came out, he would have a little sleep himself.

"I can't sleep, Ready. I'm mad with thirst," replied William.

"Yes, sir; it's very painful—I feel it myself very much, but what must those poor children feel? I pity them most."

"I pity my mother most, Ready," replied William; "it must be agony to her to witness their sufferings, and not be able to relieve them."

"Yes, indeed, it must be terrible, Master William, to a mother's feelings; but perhaps these savages will be off to-morrow, and then we shall forget all our privations."

"I trust in God that they may, Ready; but they seem very determined."

"Yes, sir; iron is gold to them; and what will civilised men not do for gold? Come, Master William, lie down at all events, even if you cannot sleep."

In the meantime Mr. Seagrave had gone into the house. He found the children still crying for water, notwithstanding the coaxing and soothing of Mrs. Seagrave, who was shedding tears as she hung over little Albert. Juno had gone out, and had dug with a spade as deep as she could, with a faint hope that some might be found, but in vain, and she had just returned mournful and disconsolate. There was no help for it but patience; and

patience could not be expected in children so young. Little Caroline only drooped, and said nothing.

"I wish I could think the savages are about to leave, Ready," said Mr. Seagrave, "it would make me very happy; but I have come out to take the watch, Ready. Will you not sleep for a while?"

"I will, sir, if you please, take a little sleep. Call me in two hours; it will then be daylight, and I can go to work, and you can get some repose yourself."

"I am too anxious to sleep; I think so, at least."

"Master William said he was too thirsty to sleep, sir; but, poor fellow, he is now fast enough."

"I trust that boy will be spared, Ready."

"I hope so too; for he is a noble fellow; but we are all in the hands of the Almighty. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, Ready."

Mr. Seagrave took his station on the plank, and was left to his own reflections; that they were not of the most pleasant kind may easily be imagined. He had, however, been well schooled by adversity, and had lately brought himself to such a frame of mind, as to bow in submission to the will of Heaven, whatever it might be. He prayed earnestly and fervently that they might be delivered from the danger and sufferings which threatened them, and became calm and tranquil; prepared for the worst, if the worst was to happen, and confidently placing himself and his family under the care of Him who orders all as He thinks best.

At daylight Ready woke up and relieved Mr. Seagrave, who did not return to the house, but lay down on the cocoanut boughs, where Ready had been lying by the side of William. As soon as Ready had got out the spike-nails and hammer, he summoned William to his assistance, and they commenced driving them into the cocoanut tree, one looking out, in case of the savages approaching, while the other was at work. In less than an hour they had gained the top of the tree close to the boughs, and had a very commanding view of the bay, as well as inland. William, who was driving the last dozen spikes took a survey, and then came down to Ready.

"I can see everything, Ready; they have pulled down the old house altogether, and are most of them lying down outside, covered up with their war-cloaks; some women are walking to and fro from the canoes, which are lying on the beach where they first landed."

"They have pulled down the house to obtain the iron nails, I

have no doubt," replied Ready. "Did you see any of their dead?"

"No, I did not look about very much, but I will go up again directly. I came down because my hands were jarred with hammering, and the hammer was so heavy to carry. In a minute or two I shall go up light enough. My lips are burning, Ready, and swelled; the skin is peeling off. I had no idea that want of water would have been so dreadful. I think poor Tommy is more than punished already."

"A child does not reflect upon consequences, Master William, nor could we possibly foresee that this using up the water could have created such misery. It was an idle trick of his, and whatever may be the consequences, it still can be considered as such, and nothing more."

"I was in hopes of finding a cocoanut or two on the tree, but there was not one."

"And if you had found one, it would not have had any milk in it at this season of the year. However, Master William, if the savages do not go away to-day, something must be done. I wish now that you would go up again, and see if they are not stirring."

William again mounted to the top of the tree, and remained up for some minutes; when he came down, he said, "They are all up now, and swarming like bees. I counted two hundred and sixty of the men, in their war-cloaks and feather head-dresses; the women are passing to and fro from the well with water; there is nobody at the canoes except eight or ten women, who are beating their heads, I think, or something of the kind. I could not make it out well, but they seem all doing the same thing."

"I know what they are about, Master William; they are cutting themselves with knives or other sharp instruments. It is the custom of these people. The dead are all put into the canoes, and these women are lamenting over them; perhaps they are going away, since the dead are in the canoes; but there is no saying."

CHAPTER LV

Consultation—Extreme Thirst—Ready's Proposal—Ready's Attempt--Ready wounded—Water supplied.

THE second day was passed in keeping a lookout upon the savages, and awaiting a fresh attack. They could perceive from the top of the cocoanut tree that the savages held a council of war in the forenoon, sitting round in a large circle, while one got up in the centre, and made a speech, flourishing his club and spear while he spoke. In the afternoon the council broke up, and the savages were observed to be very busy in all directions, cutting down the cocoanut trees, and collecting all the brushwood.

Ready watched them for a long while, and at last came down a little before sunset. "Mr. Seagrave," said he, "we shall have, in my opinion, no attack this night, but to-morrow we must expect something very serious; the savages are cutting down the trees, and making large faggots; they do not get on very fast, because their hatchets are made of stone and don't cut very well: but perseverance and numbers will effect everything, and I dare-say that they will work all night till they have obtained as many faggots as they want."

"But what do you imagine to be their object, Ready, in cutting down trees, and making the faggots?"

"Either, sir, to pile them up outside the palisades, so large as to be able to walk up upon them, or else to pile them up to set fire to them, and burn us out."

"Do you think they will succeed?"

"Not without very heavy loss; perhaps we may beat them off, but it will be a hard fight; harder than any we have had yet. We must have the women to load the muskets, so that we may fire as fast as we can. I should not think much of their attempts to burn us, if it were not for the smoke. Cocoanut wood, especially with the bark on, as our palisades have, will char a long while, but not burn easily when standing upright; and the fire, when the faggots are kindled, although it will be fierce, will not last long."

"But suffering as we are now, Ready, for want of water, how can we possibly keep up our strength to meet them in a suffocating smoke and flame? We must drop with sheer exhaustion."

" We must hope for the best, and do our best, Mr. Seagrave." replied Ready; " and recollect that, should anything happen to me during the conflict, if there is any chance of your being over-powered, you must take advantage of the smoke, to escape into the woods, and find your way to the tents. I have no doubt that you will be able to do that; of course the attack will be to windward, if they use fire, and you must try and escape to leeward; I have shown William how to force a palisade if necessary. The savages, if they get possession, will not think of looking for you at first, and, perhaps, when they have obtained all that the house contains, not even afterwards."

" Why do you say if any accident happens to you, Ready?" said William.

" Because, Master William, if they place the faggots so as to be able to walk to the top of the palisades, I may be wounded or killed, and so may you."

" Of course," replied William; " but they are not in yet, and they shall have a hard fight for it."

Ready then told Mr. Seagrave that he would keep the watch, and call him at twelve o'clock. During these two days they had eaten very little; a turtle had been killed, and pieces fried; but eating only added to their thirst, and even the children refused the meat. The sufferings were now really dreadful, and poor Mrs. Seagrave was almost frantic.

As soon as Mr. Seagrave had gone into the house, Ready called William, and said, " Master William, water we must have. I cannot bear to see the agony of the poor children, and the state of mind which your poor mother is in; and more, without water we never shall be able to beat off the savages to-morrow. We shall literally die of choking in the smoke, if they use fire. Now, William, I intend to take one of the seven-gallon barricos, and go down to the well for water. I may succeed, and I may not, but attempt it I must; and if I fall it cannot be helped."

" Why not let me go, Ready?" replied William.

" For many reasons, William," said Ready; " and the chief one is, that I do not think you would succeed so well as I shall. I shall put on the war-cloak and feathers of the savage who fell dead inside of the stockade, and that will be a disguise; but I shall take no arms except his spear, as they would only be in my way, and increase the weight I have to carry. Now, observe you must let me out of the door, and when I am out, in case of accident, put one of the poles across it inside; that will keep the door fast if they attack it, until you can secure it with the others.

Watch my return, and be all ready to let me in. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, perfectly, Ready, but I am now, I must confess, really frightened; if anything should happen to you, what a misery it would be."

"There is no help for it, William. Water must, if possible, be procured, and now is a better time to make the attempt than later, when they may be more on the watch; they have left off their work, and are busy eating; if I meet any one it will only be a woman."

Ready went for the barrico, a little cask, which held six or seven gallons of water. He put on the head-dress and war-cloak of the savage; and, taking the barrico on his shoulder, and the spear in his hand, the poles which barred the door were softly removed by William, and after ascertaining that no one was concealed beneath the palisades, Ready pressed William's hand, and set off across the cleared space outside of the stockade, and gained the cocoanut trees. William, as directed, closed the door, passed one pole through the inner door-posts for security, and remained on the watch. He was in an awful state of suspense, listening to the slightest noise; even the slight rustling by the wind of the cocoanut boughs above him made him start: there he continued for some minutes, his gun ready cocked by his side.

"It is time that he returned," thought William; "the distance is not a hundred yards, and yet I have heard no noise." At last he thought he heard footsteps coming very softly. Yes, it was so. Ready was returning, and without any accident. William had his hand upon the pole, to slip it on one side, and open the door, when he heard a scuffle and a fall close to the door. He immediately threw down the pole and opened it, just as Ready called him by name. William seized his musket, and sprang out; he found Ready struggling with a savage, who was uppermost, and with his spear at Ready's breast. In a second William levelled and fired, and the savage fell dead by the side of Ready.

"Take the water in quick, William," said Ready in a faint voice; "I will contrive to crawl in if I can."

William caught up the barrico of water, and took it in; he then hastened to Ready, who was on his knees. Mr. Seagrave, hearing the musket fired, had run out, and finding the stockade door open, followed William, and seeing him endeavouring to support Ready, caught hold of his other arm, and they led him

tottering into the stockade: the door was then immediately secured, and they went to his assistance.

"Are you hurt, Ready?" said William.

"Yes, dear boy, yes; hurt to death, I fear: his spear went through my breast. Water, quick, water!"

"Alas, that we had some!" said Mr. Seagrave.

"We have, papa," replied William; "but it has cost us dearly."

William ran for a pannikin, and taking out the bung, poured some water out of the barrico, and gave it to Ready, who drank it with eagerness.

"Now, William, lay me down on these cocoanut boughs; go and give some water to the others, and when you have all drunk, then come to me again. Don't tell Mrs. Seagrave that I'm hurt. Do as I beg of you."

"Papa, take the water—do, pray," replied William; "I cannot leave Ready."

"I will, my boy," replied Mr. Seagrave; "but first drink yourself."

William, who was very faint, drank off the pannikin of water, which immediately revived him, and then, while Mr. Seagrave hastened with some water to the children and women, occupied himself with old Ready, who breathcd heavily, but did not speak.

CHAPTER LVI

Ready's Wound—Mrs. Seagrave—Conversation—Ready and William—The Lookout—Attack of Stockade—Relief at hand—Captain Osborn arrives.

AFTER returning twice for water, to satisfy those in the house, Mr. Seagrave came to the assistance of William, who had been removing Ready's clothes to ascertain the nature and extent of the wound which he had received.

"We had better move him to where the other cocoanut boughs lie; he will be more comfortable there," said William.

Ready whispered, "More water." William gave him some more, and then, with the assistance of his father, Ready was removed to a more comfortable place. As soon as they had laid him there, Ready turned on his side, and threw up a quantity of blood.

"I am better now," said he in a low voice; "bind up the

wound, William; an old man like me has not much blood to spare."

Mr. Seagrave and William then opened his shirt and examined the wound; the spear had gone deep into the lungs. William threw off his own shirt, tore it up into strips, and then bound up the wound so as to stop the effusion of blood.

Ready, who at first appeared much exhausted with being moved about, gradually recovered so as to be able to speak in a low voice, when Mrs. Seagrave came out of the house.

"Where is that brave, kind man?" cried she, "that I may bless him and thank him."

Mr. Seagrave went to her, and caught her by the arm.

"He is hurt, my dear: I am afraid very much hurt. I did not tell you at the time."

Mr. Seagrave first briefly related what had occurred, and then led her to where old Ready was lying. Mrs. Seagrave knelt by his side, took his hand, and burst into tears.

"Don't weep for me, dear madam," said Ready; "my days have been numbered; I'm only sorry that I cannot any more be useful to you."

"Dear, good old man," said Mrs. Seagrave, after a pause, "whatever may be our fates, and that is for the Almighty to decide for us, as long as I have life, what you have done for me and mine shall never be forgotten."

Mrs. Seagrave then bent over him, and, kissing his forehead, rose from her knees, and retired weeping into the house.

"William," said Ready, "I can't talk now; raise my head a little, and then leave me; I shall be better if I'm quiet. You have not looked round lately. Come again in about half an hour. Leave me now, Mr. Seagrave; I shall be better if I doze a little."

William and Mr. Seagrave complied with Ready's request; they went up to the planks, and examined all round the stockade, cautiously and carefully; at last they stopped.

"This is a sad business, William," said Mr. Seagrave.

William shook his head. "He would not let me go," replied he; "I wish he had. I fear that he is much hurt; do you think so, papa?"

"I should say that he cannot recover, William. We shall miss him to-morrow, if they attack us; I fear much for the result."

"I hardly know what to say, papa; but this I feel that, since we have been relieved, I am able to do twice as much as I could have done before."

"I feel the same, my dear boy; but still, with such a force against us, two people cannot do much."

"If my mother and Juno load the muskets for us," replied William, "we shall at all events do as much now as we should have been able to do if there were three; so exhausted as we should have been."

"Perhaps so, my dear William; at all events we will do our best, for we fight for our lives and the lives of those most dear to us."

William went softly up to Ready, and found that the old man was dozing, if not asleep; he did not therefore disturb him, but returned to his father; they carried the barrico of water into the house, and put it in Mrs. Seagrave's charge, that it might not be wasted; and now that their thirst had been appeased, they all felt the calls of hunger. Juno and William went and cut off steaks from the turtle, and fried them; they all made a hearty meal, and perhaps never had they taken one with so much relish in their lives.

It was nearly daylight when William, who had several times been softly up to Ready to ascertain whether he slept or not, found him with his eyes open.

"How do you find yourself, Ready?" said William.

"I am quiet and easy, William, and without much pain; but I think I am sinking, and shall not last long. Recollect that if you are obliged to escape from the stockade, William, you take no heed of me, but leave me where I am. I cannot live, and were you to move me, I should only die the sooner."

"I had rather die with you than leave you, Ready."

"No, sir, that is wrong and foolish; you must save your mother and your brothers and sister; promise me that you will do as I wish."

William hesitated.

"I point out to you your duty, Master William. I know what your feelings are, but you must not give way to them; promise me this, or you will make me very miserable."

William squeezed Ready's hand; his heart was too full to speak.

"They will come at daylight, William—I think so, at least: you have not much time to spare; climb to the lookout, and wait there till day dawns; watch them as long as you can in safety, and then come down, to tell me what you have seen."

Ready's voice became faint after this exertion of speaking so much.

He motioned to William, who immediately climbed up the cocoanut tree, and waited there till daylight.

At the dawn of day, he perceived that the savages were at work, that they had collected all the faggots together opposite to where the old house had stood, and were very busy in making arrangements for the attack. At last he perceived that they everyone shouldered a faggot, and commenced their advance towards the stockade; William immediately descended from the tree, and called his father, who was talking with Mrs. Seagrave. The muskets were all loaded, and Mrs. Seagrave and Juno took their posts below the planking, to reload them as fast as they were fired.

"We must fire upon them as soon as we are sure of not missing them, William," said Mr. Seagrave; "for the more we check their advance the better."

When the first savages were within fifty yards, they both fired, and two of the men dropped; and they continued to fire as their assailants came up, with great success for the first ten minutes; after which the savages advanced in a larger body, and took the precaution to hold the faggots in front of them, for some protection as they approached. By these means they gained the stockade in safety, and commenced laying their faggots. Mr. Seagrave and William still kept up an incessant fire upon them, but not with so much success as before.

Although many fell, the faggots were gradually heaped up, till they almost reached to the holes between the palisades, through which they pointed their muskets; and as the savages contrived to slope them down from the stockade to the ground, it was evident that they meant to mount up and take them by escalade. At last it appeared as if all the faggots had been placed, and the savages retired farther back, to where the cocoanut trees were still standing.

"They have gone away, father," said William; "but they will come again, and I fear it is all over with us."

"I fear so too, my noble boy," replied Mr. Scaggrave; "they are only retreating to arrange for a general assault, and they now will be able to gain an entrance. I almost wish that they had fired the faggots; we might have escaped as Ready pointed out to us, but now I fear we have no chance."

"Don't say a word to my mother," said William; "let us defend ourselves to the last, and if we are overpowered, it is the will of God."

"I should like to take a farewell embrace of your dear mother," said Mr. Seagrave; "but no; it will be weakness just now. I

had better not. Here they come, William, in a swarm. Well, God bless you, my boy; we shall all, I trust, meet in heaven."

The whole body of savages were now advancing from the cocoanut wood in a solid mass; they raised a yell, which struck terror into the hearts of Mrs. Seagrave and Juno, yet they flinched not. The savages were again within fifty yards of them, when the fire was opened upon them; the fire was answered by loud yells, and the savages had already reached to the bottom of the sloping pile of faggots, when the yells and the reports of the muskets were drowned by a much louder report, followed by the crackling and breaking of the cocoanut trees, which made both parties start with surprise; another and another followed, the ground was ploughed up, and the savages fell in numbers.

"It must be the cannon of a ship, father," said William, "we are saved—we are saved!"

"It can be nothing else; we are saved, and by a miracle," replied Mr. Seagrave in utter astonishment.

The savages paused in the advance, quite stupefied; again, again, again, the report of the loud guns boomed through the air, and the round shot and grape came whizzing and tearing through the cocoanut grove; at this last broadside, the savages turned and fled towards their canoes: not one was left to be seen.

"We are saved!" cried Mr. Seagrave, leaping off the plank and embracing his wife, who sank down on her knees, and held up her clasped hands in thankfulness to Heaven.

William had hastened up to the lookout on the cocoanut tree, and now cried out to them below, as the guns were again discharged—

"A large schooner, father; she is firing at the savages, who are at the canoes; they are falling in every direction some have plunged into the water; there is a boatful of armed men coming on shore; they are close to the beach, by the garden point. Three of the canoes have got off full of men; there go the guns again; two of the canoes are sunk, father; the boat has landed, and the people are coming up this way," William then descended from the lookout as fast as he could.

As soon as he was down, he commenced unbarring the door of the stockade. He pulled out the last pole just as he heard the feet of their deliverers outside. He threw open the door, and a second after found himself in the arms of Captain Osborn.

CHAPTER LVII

Explanation—Ready Dying—Ready's Death—Regret--Arrangements.

BEFORE we wind up this history, it will be as well to state to my young readers how it was that Captain Osborn made his appearance at so fortunate a moment. It will be recollected how a brig came off the island some months before this, and the great disappointment that the party on the island experienced in her not making her appearance again, especially as they had seen the flags which they had hoisted.

The fact was, that those on board of the brig had not only seen their signals, but had read the name of the *Pacific* upon the flag hoisted; but the heavy gale which came on drove them so far to the southward, that the master of the brig did not consider that he should do his duty to his owners if he lost so much time in beating up for the island again; the cargo which he had on board was one which would lose in value if it were not one of the first in the market. He therefore decided upon making all sail for Sydney, to which port he was bound.

When Captain Osborn was put into the boat by Mackintosh and the seamen of the *Pacific*, he was still insensible; but he gradually recovered, and after a stormy night, during which the men had the greatest difficulty in keeping the boat afloat, Captain Osborn was so far recovered as to hear from Mackintosh what had taken place, and why it was that he found himself in an open boat at sea. The next morning the wind moderated, and they were fortunate enough to fall in with a vessel bound to Van Diemen's Land, which took them all on board.

From the account given by Mackintosh, Captain Osborn had no doubt in his mind but that the Seagrave family had perished, and the loss of the vessel, with them on board, was duly reported to the owners. When at Van Diemen's Land, Captain Osborn was so much taken with the beauty and fertility of the country, and perhaps not so well inclined to go to sea again after such danger as he had incurred in the last voyage, that he resolved to purchase land and settle there. He did so, and had already stocked his farm with cattle, and had gone round to Sydney in a schooner to await the arrival of a large order from England which he had sent for, when the brig arrived and reported the existence

of some white people on the small island, and also that they had hoisted a flag with the name *Pacific* worked on it.

Captain Osborn hearing this, went to the master of the brig and questioned him. He found the latitude and longitude of the island to be not far from that of the ship when she was deserted, and he was now convinced that, by some miracle, the Seagrave family had been preserved. He therefore went to the Governor of New South Wales, and made him acquainted with the facts which had been established, and the Governor instantly replied that the Government armed schooner was at his service, if he would himself go in quest of his former shipmates. Inconvenient as the absence at that time was to Captain Osborn, he at once acquiesced, and in a few days the schooner sailed for her destination. She arrived off the island on the same morning that the fleet of canoes with the savages effected their landing, and when William made the remark to Ready as they were hastening into the stockade, that there was another vessel under sail off the garden point, had Ready had time to put his eye to the telescope, he would have discovered that it was the schooner, and not, as he supposed, a canoe which had separated from the others during the night.

The schooner stood in to the reefs, and then hauled off again, that she might send her boat in, to sound for an anchorage. The boat, when sounding, perceived the canoes and the savages, and afterwards heard the report of firearms on the first attack. On her return on board the schooner, they stated what they had seen and heard, and their idea that the white people on the island were being attacked by the savages. As the boat did not return on board till near dusk, they had not time to canvass the question, when the night attack was made and they again heard the firing of the muskets. This made Captain Osborn most anxious to land as soon as possible, but as the savages were in such numbers, and the crew of the schooner did not consist of more than twenty-five men, the commander considered it was rash to make the attempt. He did, however, show the utmost anxiety to bring his schooner to an anchor so as to protect his men, and then agreed that they should land.

The boat had reported deep water and good anchorage close to the garden point, and every preparation was made for running at daylight on the following morning; but unfortunately, it fell calm for the best part of the day, and it was not until the morning after, just as the savages were making their last attack upon the stockade that she could get in. As soon as she did, she opened

the fire of her carronades, and the result is already known; the savages fled in all directions, the boat was then manned, and Captain Osborn led the party who landed, and came so opportunely to their relief.

My readers must, if they can, imagine the joy of Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave when they beheld their old friend Captain Osborn. All danger was now over; the party who had landed with him went out under the command of the mate, to ascertain if there were any more of the savages to be found; but, except the dead and dying, all had escaped in some of the smaller canoes. Captain Osborn remained with the Seagraves, and in a few words told his own history, and they then informed him of the state of poor old Ready, whom William had gone to attend as soon as Captain Osborn was engaged with his father and mother. Captain Osborn hurried out to see him; Ready knew him immediately, that is, he knew his voice, for the old man's eyes were already so dim that he could not see.

"That is Captain Osborn, I know," said Ready in a faint voice. "You have come in good time, sir; I knew you would come, and I always said so: you have the thanks of a dying man."

"I hope it is not so bad as that, Ready; we have a surgeon on board, and I will send for him at once."

"No surgeon can help me, sir," replied Ready; "another hour of time will not pass before I shall be in Eternity. I thank God for the preservation of the family, but, Captain Osborn, my time is come."

The old man then joined his hands across his breast, and remained for some time in silent prayer.

"We had better leave," said Captain Osborn; "he wishes not to be interrupted. I will send for the surgeon, at all events, although I feel it is useless; the hand of death is already on him."

Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave walked away with Captain Osborn, all of them much affected with the scene. William still remained by Ready's side to give him water when he asked for it. A few minutes afterwards, Ready opened his eyes.

"Are you there, William? I can't see you. Listen to me, my dear boy. Let me be buried under the trees on the mound above the well. I wish to lie there. Poor little Tommy; don't let him know that he was the cause of my death. Bring him here now, and Juno and Caroline, to say good-bye, William."

William, with the tears rolling down his cheeks, hastened into

the house, and communicated Ready's wish to his father and mother. They all went out in a body, to take a last farewell; Ready called them all by name, one after another. They knelt down as he called them, and kissed him. He bade them farewell in a faint voice, which at last was changed to a mere whisper. They still remained, in silence and in tears, standing round him, William only kneeling and holding his hand, when the old man's head fell back, and he was no more!

"It is all over," said Mr. Seagrave mournfully, "and he has, I have no doubt, gone to receive the reward of a good and just man. 'Happy are those who die in the Lord.'"

Mr. Seagrave then led away his wife and children, leaving Juno and William. Poor Juno cried as if her heart would break as soon as her master and mistress were gone, and she could give vent to her feelings. William tried to console her.

"Oh, Massa William, me often think, and me really think now, he sent by Heaven to save us all. He just live long enough to do all he could, and now he gone to Heaven again."

"I trust he has, Juno; I hope I may live as well and die as well as he has done."

William closed up the eyes, and Juno went and fetched the ship's ensign, which they laid over the body, after which they joined the rest of the party in the house.

During the time that William had remained with old Ready, the commander of the schooner had landed with another party. Captain Osborn introduced him to Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, and arrangements were commenced for the embarkation. It was decided that the following day should be passed in packing up and getting on board their luggage, and that the day after the family should embark. William then mentioned the wish of poor old Ready, as to his burial. The commander immediately gave directions for a coffin to be made, and for his men to dig the grave at the spot that William should point out. It was also arranged that Juno should go round with the boat the next morning at daylight, to point out the little harbour, that they might take on board the merino sheep, which were of value; all the other animals, with the exception of the dogs, were to be left on the island, for the benefit of those who might, at any future time, meet with a disaster similar to that of the crew and passengers of the *Pacific*.

The boats were on shore early the next morning, and the luggage was taken on board; but Mr. Seagrave would not take anything which could prove useful to any people who might be wrecked

on the island; the furniture, tools, iron-work, nails, beef and pork, and flour, were all put into the house and locked up; the luggage therefore carried away was not very great, and was soon on board.

CHAPTER LVIII

Ready's Grave—Regrets—Juno in Sorrow—Conversation—Remarks on Ready—Ready's Funeral—Love for the Island—Schooner sails—Arrival at Sydney—Seagrave Family.

THE hurry and bustle of preparing for their departure from the island, and the rapid succession of events which had been crowded together within so very few days, had not allowed time much for thought or reflection to Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave and William; at length, however, every preparation, had been made and they were no longer urged by the commander of the schooner to hasten their packing up and arrangements: for everything had been sent on board during the afternoon, and it was proposed that they should sail on the following day.

Now they had time to feel, and bitterly did they lament the loss of their old friend, and deplore that he had not survived to sail with them to Sydney. They had always indulged the hope that one day they should be taken off the island, and in that hope they had ever looked forward to old Ready becoming a part of their future household. Now that their wishes had been granted,—now that their fond longings were about to be realised,—so much was the feeling of joy and gratitude mingled with regret—so great was their grief at the loss of their preserver,—that, could he have been restored to them, they felt as if they would have gladly remained on the island.

Captain Osborn, the commander, and crew of the schooner, had taken leave of them for the night, and had gone on board, having made arrangements for the interment of Ready, previous to their sailing, on the following day. The children had been put to bed, and Juno had quitted the house; Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave and William were sitting together in their now half-dismantled room, when Juno entered; the poor girl had evidently been weeping.

"Well, Juno," observed Mr. Seagrave, with a view to break the silence, which had continued for some time previous to her entrance, "are you not glad to leave the island?"

"One time I think I would be very glad, but now I not care

much," replied Juno. "Island very nice place; all very happy till savage come. Suppose they not kill old Ready, I not care."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Seagrave, "it is a sad blow to us all; I did hope to have fostered the good old man, and to have been able to have shown him our gratitude, but—"

"It is the will of Heaven that it should be otherwise," continued Mr. Seagrave; "I would give half that I am possessed of, that he had not perished."

"Oh, massa!" said Juno, "I sit by him just now; I take off the flag and look at his face, so calm, look so happy, so good, I almost tink he smile at me, and then I cry. Oh, Massa Tommy, all because you, idle boy."

"It adds much to my regret," replied Mr. Seagrave, "that his life should have been sacrificed through the thoughtlessness of one of my own children; what a lesson it will be to Tommy when he is old enough to comprehend fully the consequences of his conduct."

"That he must not know, papa," said William, who had been leaning mournfully over the table; "one of Ready's last injunctions was that Tommy was never to be told of it. He made me promise."

"His last wishes shall be religiously attended to, my dear boy," replied Mr. Seagrave; "for what do we not owe to that good old man? When others deserted us and left us to perish, he remained with us to share our fate, with every prospect that that ocean would bury us. By his skill we were saved and landed in safety. He provided for our wants, added to our comforts, instructed us how to make the best use of our means, was our adviser, and, I may say, our protector. What should we have done without him? Without his precautions, we should have perished by the spears of the savages. It was his self-devotion which procured the water which saved our lives, and it was in this act that he sacrificed his own. What an example of Christian fortitude and humility did he ever show us; and indeed, I may truly say, that by his example, sinful as I must ever be, I have become, I trust, a better man. Would that he were now sitting by us,—but the Lord's will be done."

"I feel as if I had lost a stay or prop, my dear husband," replied Mrs. Seagrave. "So accustomed have I been to look to him for advice since we have been on this island. I feel now constantly that there is something wanting, and then I recollect that it is he who is away from me. Had he not been thus snatched

from us—had he been spared to us a few years, and had we been permitted to have surrounded his deathbed, and have closed his eyes in peace——” and Mrs. Seagrave wept upon the shoulder of her husband.

After a time, Mrs. Seagrave recovered herself; but silence ensued, only broken by an occasional sob from poor Juno. William’s heart was too full; he could not for a long while utter a word; at last he said, in a low voice—

“ I feel that, next to my dear father and mother, I have lost my best friend. I cannot forgive myself for allowing him to go for the water; it was my duty to go, and I ought to have gone.”

“ And yet we could have ill spared you, my dear boy; you might have perished,” replied Mrs. Seagrave.

“ It would have been as God willed, my dear mother,” replied William; “ I might have perished, or I might not.”

“ We never know what the morrow may bring forth,” said Mr. Seagrave, “ or what may be in store for us. Had not this misfortune happened, had old Ready been spared to us, how joyfully should I and all of you have quitted this island, full of anticipation, and indulging in worldly prospects. What a change has been brought over me by this melancholy death! What a check have I received! I now am all thought and anxiety. I have said to myself, ‘ We have been happy on this island; our wants have been supplied; even our comforts have been great. We have been under no temptations, for we have been isolated from the world; am I so sure that I shall be as happy in future as I have been? Am I confident, now my long-wished-for return to the world is about to take place, that I shall have no cause to lament that I ever quitted this peaceful quiet spot?’ I feel, my dear wife, that it is my duty to my family that I should return to society, but I am far from feeling that our happiness may be increased. We have, however, a plain precept to follow, which is, to do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us.”

“ Yes, my dear husband,” replied Mrs. Seagrave; “ I feel the truth of all you have just said. We are in His hands, and let us put our trust in Him.”

“ We will, dearest,” replied Mr. Seagrave; “ but it is late, and we have to rise early to-morrow morning. This is the last evening which we shall pass on this island; let us return our thanks for the happiness we have enjoyed here; let us confide in Him for our future welfare, and let us bow in humility to the

chastening with which He has thought proper to visit us. We thought to have quitted this spot in joy,—it is His will that we should leave it in sorrow."

Mr. Seagrave took down the Bible, and after he had read a chapter, he poured forth a prayer suited to their feelings, and they all retired to repose.

The next morning they were up early, and packed up the few articles which still remained to go on board. Mr. Seagrave read the prayers, and they went to breakfast. Few words were exchanged, for there was a solemn grief upon all of them. They waited for the arrival of Captain Osborn and the crew of the schooner to attend the funeral of poor old Ready. William, who had gone out occasionally to look at the vessel, now came in, and said that two boats were pulling on shore. A few minutes afterwards, Captain Osborn and the commander of the schooner made their appearance, and after a short conversation, they went out to give directions. The coffin had been brought on shore; the body of Ready was put into it, and it was screwed down. William attended the process, and the tears fell fast down his cheeks as the lid was put over, and he saw the last of his old friend.

In half an hour all was prepared, and the family were summoned from the house. It was arranged that William, Mr. Seagrave, Captain Osborn, and Juno (at her own request) should be the pall-bearers.

The coffin covered with the Union Jack as a pall, was raised on the shoulders of six of the seamen, and they bore it to the grave, followed by Mrs. Seagrave and the children, the commander of the schooner, and several of the men. Mr. Seagrave read the funeral service, which was occasionally interrupted by the sobbing of Juno, the grave was filled up, and they all walked back in silence. At the request of William, the commander of the schooner had ordered the carpenter to prepare an oak paling to put round the grave, and a board, on which was written the name of the deceased and day of his death. As soon as this had been fixed up, William, with a deep sigh, followed the commander of the schooner to the house, to announce that all was finished, and that the boat waited for them to embark.

"Come, my dear," said Mr. Seagrave to his wife.

"I will, I will," replied Mrs. Seagrave, "but I don't know how it is, now that the hour is come, I really feel such pain at quitting this dear island. Had it not been for poor Ready's death, I really do think I should wish to remain."

"I don't doubt but that you feel sorrow, my dear; but we must not keep Captain Osborn waiting."

"I should like to have time to visit once more all our little property,—the garden, the fish-pond, the turtle-pond; I should like to wish good-bye even to animals, Seagrave; it may be a weakness, but I cannot help it,"

"Do we leave Nanny, mamma," said Caroline, "and all the chickens?"

"Yes, my dear; we leave all the goats and fowls for other people, if they come to the island."

"Do we leave all the turtle in the pond?" said Tommy; "turtle makes good soup. I like turtle."

"That's well thought of," said Captain Osborn; "we will take the turtle on board. It will not be losing much time."

"Oh, no," replied the commander of the schooner; "go down, then, my men, push one of the boats round, and get the turtle on board."

While this delay took place, Mrs. Seagrave walked to Ready's grave, to see the paling and board which William had told her had been put up. She would have lingered still, hanging on her husband's arm, but Captain Osborn again came to tell her that the boat waited for them.

As Mr. Seagrave was aware that the commander of the schooner was anxious to get clear of the islands before night, he now led his wife down to the boat. They all embarked and were soon on the deck of the schooner, from whence they continued to fix their eyes upon the island, while the men were heaving up the anchor. At last sail was made upon the vessel, the garden point was cleared, and as they ran away with a fair wind, each object on the shore became more indistinct. Still their eyes were turned in that direction. Juno and William stood abaft; William had the spyglass, and was looking through it very steadily as the vessel ran on, when Captain Osborn inquired what he was looking at. "I am taking my last farewell of Ready's grave," replied William.

"He really a good man," said Juno in a low voice.

As they ran down to the westward, they passed the cove where they had first landed, and Mr. Seagrave directed Mrs. Seagrave's attention to it. Mrs. Seagrave remained for some time looking at it in silence, and then said as she turned away—

"We shall never be more happy than we were on that island, Seagrave."

"It will indeed be well, my dear, if we never are less happy," replied her husband.

The schooner now ran fast through the water, and the island was every minute less distinct; after a time, the land was below the horizon, and the tops of the cocoanut trees only to be seen: these gradually disappeared. Juno watched on, and when at last nothing could be seen, she waved her handkerchief in the direction of the island, as if to bid it farewell, and then went down below to hide her grief.

The wind continued fair, and, after a favourable passage of little more than four weeks, they arrived at Sydney Cove, the port to which they were bound when they embarked from England on board of the good ship *Pacific*.

P.S.—As my young readers will probably wish to know a little more about the Seagrave family I, will inform them that Mr. Seagrave, like the patriarch Job after his tribulation, found his flocks and herds greatly increased on his arrival at Sydney. The agent whom he had left in charge of his property had been diligent and honest, and although it was fully believed that the whole of the family had perished, and that the estates would go to distant heirs, still the delay of law proceedings and the many months which it required to communicate with England, added to the want of positive knowledge of their loss, had not yet permitted the estates to pass away, and they were still in the hands of the executors. Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave lived to see all their children grown up. William inherited the greater part of the property from his father, after having for many years assisted him in the management of it. He married and had a numerous family. Tommy, notwithstanding all his scrapes, grew up a very fine fellow, and entered the army. He is now a major, and is said to retain his juvenile tastes so far, that, among his many arduous duties, he still is a very sedulous and efficient officer at the *Mess Table*. Caroline married a young clergyman, and made him an excellent wife; little Albert went into the navy, and is at present a commander.

Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave are both dead, but poor Juno is still alive, and lives at Seagrave Plantation with William, and her

greatest pleasure is to take his children on her knee, and tell them long stories about the island, and make them cry when she goes through the history of old Ready's death and burial.

And now, my dear children, having given you all the information that I possess, I have only to add, that I hope you like what I have written for you, and bid you heartily farewell.

THE END